

Greene County Farm and Forest Protection Plan

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Acknowledgements

The North Carolina's Eastern Region (NCER), with funding from the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund, contracted with Mount Olive College's Lois G. Britt Agribusiness Center to create farm and forest protection plans for a four county region. NCER's mission is to identify barriers and generate regional strategies for economic growth. NCER recognizes and supports the agricultural industry in eastern North Carolina and is committed to the identification of economic development opportunities for agricultural producers and agribusinesses.

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Executive Summary

On April 16, 2011, a tornado ripped through Greene County and caused an incredible amount of destruction. Since the county is so rural and agriculturally based, farms and forests that experienced significant damage will have repercussions for some time that will impact the producers, landowners, economy and the county itself. One of the major changes will be the new farmers' market location and program that was being developed and promoted. The Elaney Woods Heritage Farm and Agriculture Center, which was associated with the farmer's market, was demolished in the tornado. Efforts are now focused on recovery on farms and forests as well as with the local economy. While this plan was created prior to this event, the information in this document will assist local officials as they work with farmers and forest landowners in both short- and long-term recovery and continue support of this valuable industry to the county.

Agriculture is Greene County and Greene County is agriculture. This thought permeates the citizens, businesses and government of the county. Agriculture is the major industry in Greene and plays a significant role in the economy and social make up of the county.

The farms and forests in Greene County are vigorous and have contributed to the development of the county over the years. The impact of agriculture is noted:

- Greene County was ranked sixth in North Carolina for hogs and pigs raised in 2009.
- Greene County was ranked ninth in the state for turkeys raised in 2009.
- Greene County was ranked 10th in the state for tobacco production in 2009.
- Greene County was ranked 18th in the state for total cash receipts in 2009.
- Greene County was ranked in the top 25 counties for production of corn, cotton, soybeans and wheat in 2009.
- Agriculture and agribusiness contributed 28.3 percent to the total employment in Greene County in 2009.
- Agriculture and agribusiness contributed almost 50 percent of the county value-added in 2009.

Greene County producers face a number of challenges. Among these are an aging farming population, lack of land available to farm, increased production costs and others that will be described in this Farm and Forest Protection Plan. Concurrently, a comparable number of opportunities exist to educate, support and expand the agriculture industry with the support of the citizens and local leadership of the county. Some of the challenges and opportunities highlighted in the plan are:

- Greene County experienced a population growth of 12.6 percent from 18,974 to 21,362 from 2000 to 2010.

- Only 50 percent of the producers in the county who were surveyed for this plan derived 75 to 100 percent of their income from agriculture.
- 61 percent of the acreage farmed in Greene County was operated by part-time farmers in 2007.
- The costs of production increased 16.9 percent from 1997 to 2007.
- The average age of a producer in Greene County was 57.8 years of age in 2009. The median age in Greene County was 37 years in 2010.
- 62.5 percent of the producers surveyed expected their production to increase in the next five to 10 years.
- 87.9 percent of the non-farm residents surveyed for this plan think that Greene County should take steps to preserve farms and forests.

The intent of this plan is to help family farms and forests remain viable. Recommendations are made based on the data and research conducted for this plan. These recommendations are not regulatory nor do they inhibit a landowner from doing whatever he or she wishes to do with his or her land. They are guidelines to assist those agencies that work with family farms and forests. The recommendations also provide a framework in which to work to meet the challenges and opportunities that exist in Greene County. The recommendations are:

Maintain agriculture's economic viability.

- *Promote and expand the Voluntary Agricultural District Program and the Agricultural Advisory Board.*
- *Explore the establishment of an Enhanced Voluntary Agricultural District program in Greene County.*
- *Conduct estate and farm transition planning trainings.*
- *Establish a county forestry association.*
- *Conduct educational opportunities utilizing available resources and information for producers, landowners and the general public.*
- *Investigate the opportunity for and support funding of a Cost of Services Study for Greene County.*

Provide Marketing and Business Assistance.

- *Conduct business development training.*
- *Develop and Implement a "Buy Local" promotion that describes steps necessary to develop relationships with local markets, restaurants and grocery stores.*
- *Develop agritourism opportunities in Greene County.*

Initiate and Develop Farmland Preservation Efforts, and Encourage Young Farmer-Agribusiness Development.

- *Endorse the Farm and Forest Preservation Plan.*
- *Encourage Landowner Enrollment in Greene County's Present Use Value Program.*
- *Develop educational outreach opportunities that address conservation easements, agricultural agreements and other farmland protection programs and resources, and deliver to landowners and producers.*
- *Develop educational programs and create career opportunities for young people in agriculture, forestry and agribusiness.*

A Need for Action

Greene County is rural, and agriculture is the main industry in the county. The citizens and the county recognize and are cognizant of the importance of agriculture in the county. Greene is one of the top ranked counties in the state for specific row crops and livestock. However, agriculture in Greene County still faces challenges and issues that threaten its very existence.

The population of Greene County was 20,658 in 2009, a growth of 8.9 percent from 2000 to 2009¹. Much of this growth has come from Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in Wayne County. Greene County has also promoted its proximity to the Global TransPark in Kinston, which may add additional residents and businesses associated with the GTP once the park is fully operational. Its close location to Greenville has also contributed to business and residential recruitment to the county. This growth has brought about development of farmland and has created difficulties for farmers who want to expand and diversify their operations, and restricts opportunities for new farmers.

Greene County was defined as a Tier 1 county by the N.C. Department of Commerce in 2010 and has had this designation for a number of years. Tier status is a description of economic well-being, and the assigned Tier 1 status indicates that Greene County is considered economically distressed. North Carolina uses this tier system to encourage economic activity and incentives for economic growth in distressed areas of the state through different state programs.

In Greene County, the average age of a farmer in 2007 was 57.8 years², only slightly higher than the state average in 2007, which was 57³. The median age of all county residents was 37 years in 2010, which was far younger than the average age of farmers in the county⁴. While the general population is relatively young, the aging farmer population presents a challenge to the future of farming statewide and in Greene County.

This need for action to protect and maintain family farms and forests has not gone unnoticed. In 2009, the N.C. Department of Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund (ADFP) awarded North Carolina's Eastern Region a grant to develop Farm and Forest Protection Plans (FFPPs) for Greene, Jones, Lenoir and Onslow counties through a partnership with Mount Olive College's Lois G. Britt Agribusiness Center. These plans are poised to address the opportunities and challenges facing agriculture in each of these individual counties. Agriculture in these FFPPs is defined in the broadest sense to include horticulture, farming and forestry productions. The FFPPs follow the definition of agriculture that is set by the N.C. General Assembly General Statute: G.S. 105-277.2 through 105-277.7:

Minimum acreage of production land:

- Five acres for horticulture use

- 10 acres for agricultural use
- 20 acres for forest use

Production must follow a sound management plan.

- Agricultural and horticultural land must have at least one qualifying tract that has produced an average gross income of at least \$1,000 for the three years preceding the application year.
- Forest land must be following a forest management plan.

To best assess the county-specific issues that agriculture faces, a county team was established. The team was comprised of the Greene County manager, the Greene County planner/economic developer and representatives from N.C. Cooperative Extension Greene County Center, Greene County Economic Development, Greene County Soil and Water Conservation District, N.C. Forest Service Greene County and local farmers. The role of team members was to advise and contribute to this plan.

Interviews and surveys were conducted with and distributed to three target audiences – farmers, agribusinesses and non-farm residents – to determine the threats and opportunities to farms and forests as well as to frame the current state of agriculture in the county. The surveys were distributed in paper format and electronically at www.SurveyMonkey.com. Links to the on-line survey were featured on the county team’s websites, and the team distributed paper surveys to the populations they served. Interviews were conducted face to face and by telephone with people from all three target audiences. These interviews also contributed to the overall picture of agriculture in the county. The data collected serves as a snapshot of the overall state of agriculture in Greene County and the opportunities and challenges that exist.

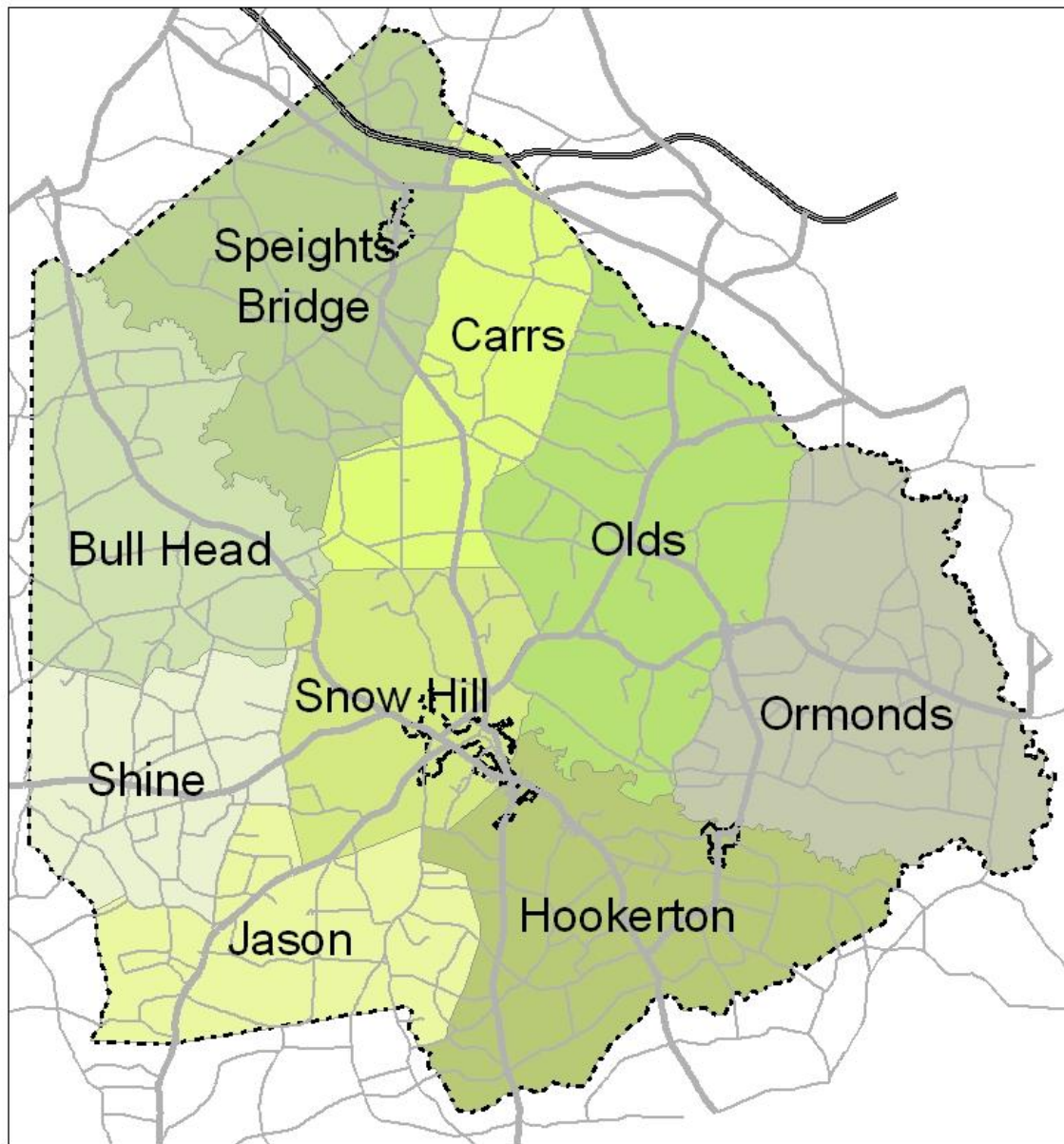
These results are incorporated in the FFPP to shape the views of agriculture, the challenges and opportunities facing agriculture, and recommendations to help keep farms and forest land viable for the future.

Overview of Agriculture in Greene County

Like many counties in North Carolina, Greene County is predominantly rural, and agriculture is the economic engine for the county. From the first European settlements along the Contentnea Creek trading route through today, agriculture has played a key role in the county's development.

Municipalities and Infrastructure

The county has three incorporated towns – Walstonburg, Hookerton and Snow Hill, the county seat. The county also has nine townships: Speights Bridge, Carrs, Olds, Ormonds, Jason, Shine, Bull Head, Snow Hill and Hookerton (Figure 1). The county is located between Goldsboro and Greenville in the coastal plain of eastern North Carolina. The county's close proximity to Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in Goldsboro and the more urban city of Greenville has attracted residents who want a rural setting, but access to more (cultural) activities.



Greene County Townships



Figure 1. Source: Greene County Tax Department – GIS

While there are no major interstates that come through the county, Greene is served by other U.S. and N.C. highways. U.S. Highway 264 crosses the northern part of the county, provides a direct link to Interstate 95 and is a major road that runs east toward Greenville and west toward the Triangle. The county is also served by U.S. Highway 258 and U.S. Highway 13, which link the county to Kinston and Goldsboro. Other roads that provide access to and through the county are N.C. Highway 58, N.C. Highway 91, N.C. Highway 123 and N.C. Highway 903. There are no road projects currently planned in Greene County according to the N.C. Department of Transportation⁵.

As of June 2011, Greene County was finalizing a draft of the countywide land use plan to present to the Board of Commissioners. The Division of Community Planning, which is part of the N.C. Department of Commerce, created the plan to help the county focus on the best use of land for the next 20 years. Currently the county does not have zoning in the unincorporated areas of the county. This draft plan acknowledges the importance of agriculture and forestry in the county and sees farmland preservation as a high priority. Two of the major goals in the draft plan for agricultural preservation are:

- Preserve the rural character of the county
- Minimize conflict between farming and land use

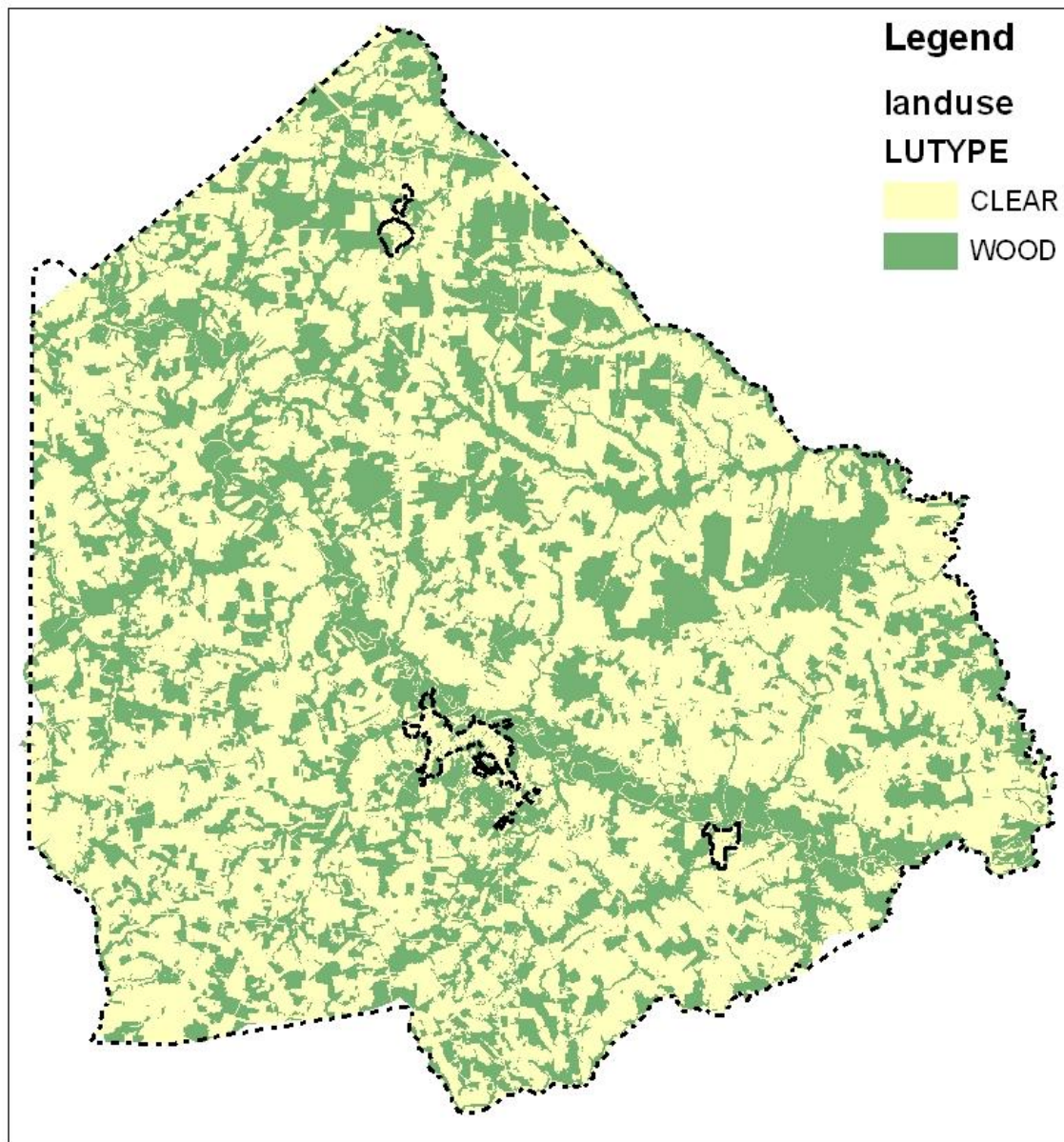
The Greene County Farm and Forest Preservation Plan has been noted in the draft as a valuable tool to use in conjunction with the Land Use Plan. For future planning, the land use plan will have a map with agricultural/residential areas and forestry that the county can use.

Greene County Public Works provides water for approximately 3,700 residents through the Greene County Regional Water System; however, according to David Jones, director of public works, a majority of farms in the county are on wells⁶. The Regional Water System purchases additional well and surface water from the Greenville Utilities (GUC). This is necessary since the county is in the central coastal plain capacity use area that is mandated by the state as to how much water it can pull from aquifers.

There is no countywide sewage treatment facility. Snow Hill and Hookerton are the only municipalities that have their own treatment facilities. Greene County has run sewer lines to serve several large projects such as the new prison, the high school and a subdivision. These areas are being served by Farmville and Kinston which are outside of Greene County. The rest of the county residents rely on septic systems.

Land Use

The majority of agricultural land in Greene County is used for crops according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's 2007 Census of Agriculture. Woodlands made up almost 20 percent of the land in farms in 2007. Figure 2 illustrates the current wooded acreage in the county. Other uses of land in farms were for livestock, hay and other crops (Figure 3).



Greene County Land Use



Figure 2. Source: Greene County Tax Department- GIS

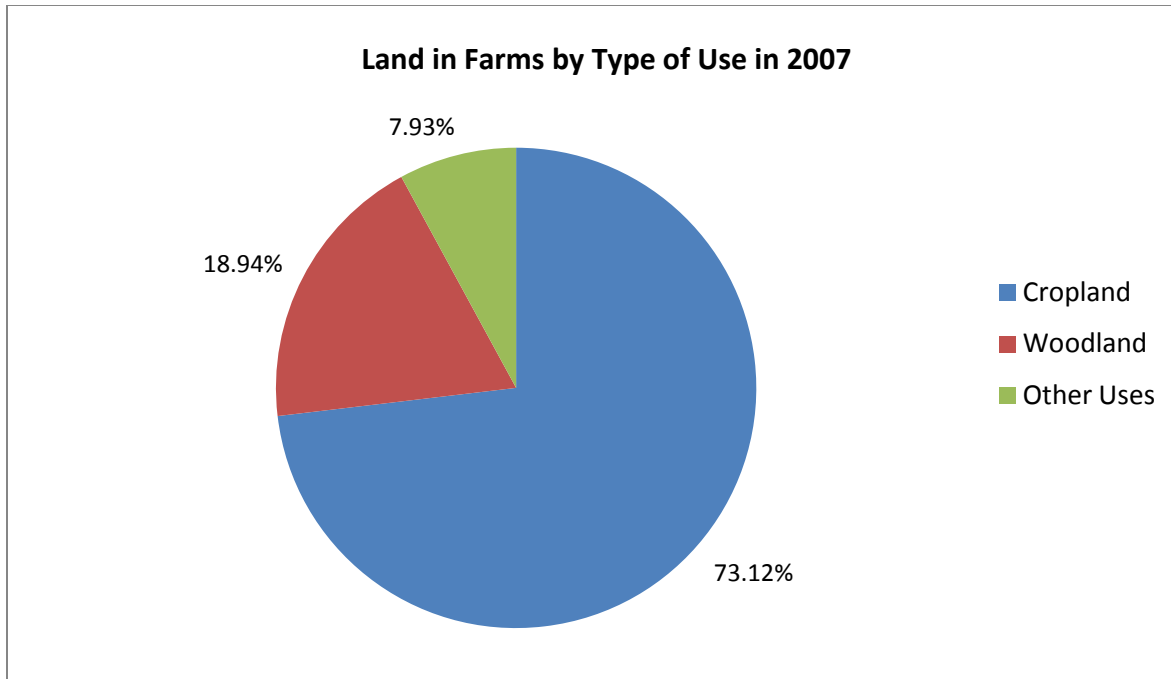


Figure 3. Land in Farm by Type Use. Source: USDA 2007 Census of Agriculture

Soils and Climate

Greene County, one of the smaller counties in North Carolina, is located in the coastal plains region of the state. The county is nearly level with the highest elevations (120 feet) found in the southwest to northwest parts of the county⁷. The county has mild winters and sub-humid summers due to the effect of the Atlantic Ocean, which is roughly 60 miles away. The average mean temperature is 62 degrees Fahrenheit, and the growing season runs from March to October. Precipitation is usually in the form of rain, which usually comes in thunderstorms in summer and more slowly and steadily in winter. Snow is rare, and it usually melts within a day⁸.

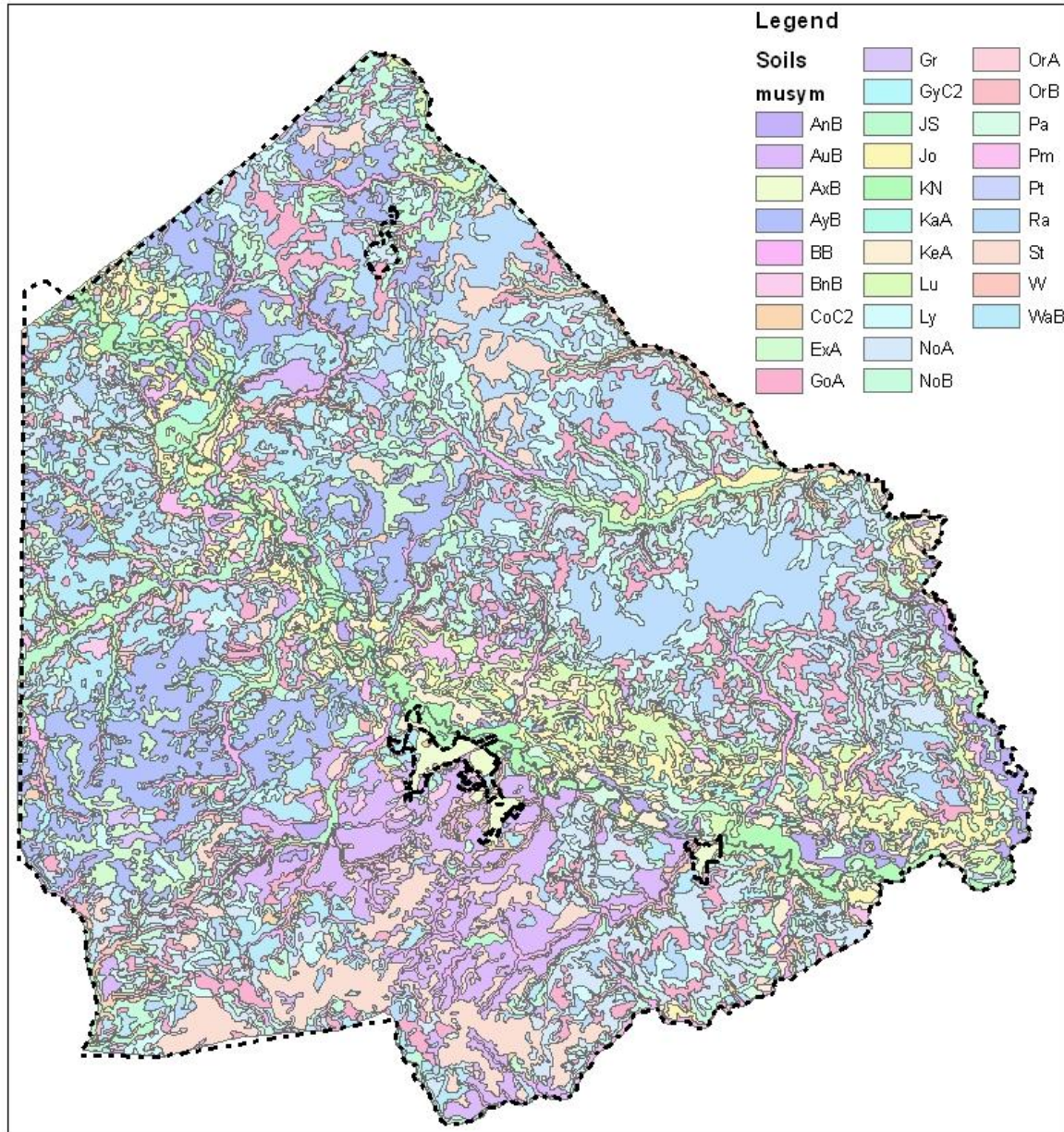
Because the county is part of the Neuse River basin, agriculture must follow *The Neuse Agricultural Rules* established by N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources. These strategies and best management practices were implemented to reduce the average load of nitrogen that goes into rivers and streams in the Neuse River basin. Multiple county agencies have been tasked to assist farmers and landowners in creating plans to meet these goals. Nutrient management plans, riparian buffers and vegetated strips are some of the options available to producers to meet these nitrogen reduction goals⁹. Soils play an important role in the management of nutrients and their movement as well.

Soil type is additionally critical to maximize agricultural and forestry production, and Greene County has good soils for a variety of agricultural commodities. Table 1 outlines the major soils in the county, and Figure 4 illustrates the distribution of the differing soil types countywide.

Acreage and Proportions of Soils in Greene County, N.C.

Soil Name and Characteristic	Acres	Percent
Alpin fine sand, 1-5% slope (AnB)	3,787	2.2
Autryville fine sand, 0-6% slope (AuB)	7,320	4.3
Autryville-urban land, 0-6% slope (AxB)	850	0.5
Aycock very fine sandy loam, 1-4% slope (AyB)	11,190	6.5
Bibb loam, frequently flooded (BB)	6,542	3.8
Blanton sand, 0-5% slope (BnB)	1,500	0.9
Cwarts sandy loam, 6-12% slope, eroded (CoC2)	4,022	2.3
Exum very fine sandy loam, 0-2% slope (ExA)	4,476	2.6
Goldsboro loamy sand, 0-2% slope (GoA)	12,912	7.5
Grantham loam (Gr)	1,033	0.6
Gritney fine sandy loam, 5-12% slope, eroded GyC2)	2,238	1.3
Johns sandy loam (Jo)	8,608	5
Johnson loam, frequently flooded (JS)	4,476	2.6
Kalmia loamy sand, 0-3% slope (KaA)	3,271	1.9
Kenansville fine sand, 0-3% slope (KeA)	5,681	3.3
Kinston loam, frequently flooded (KN)	2,926	1.7
Lumbee sandy loam (Lu)	5,164	3
Lynchburg sandy loam (Ly)	10,329	6
Norfolk (NoA) sandy loam, 0-2% slope (NoA)	15,322	8.9
Norfolk (NoB) sandy loam, 2-6% slope (NoB)	12,510	7.2
Orangeburg (OrA) loamy sand, 0-2% slope (OrA)	204	0.1
Orangeburg (OrB) loamy sand, 2-6% slope (OrB)	1,000	0.6
Pactous fine sand (Pa)	2,582	1.5
Paxville loam (Pm)	3,098	1.8
Pits (Pt)	172	0.1
Rains sandy loam (Ra)	13,600	7.9
Stallings loamy fine sand (St)	13,772	8
Wagram loamy sand, 0-6% slope (WaB)	12,025	7
Water	1,550	0.9
Total 172,160		

Table 1. Greene County Acreage and Proportion of Soils. Source: USDA NRCS Soil Survey



Greene County Soils



Figure 4. Source: Greene County Tax Department - GIS

Farm Ownership and Acreage

U.S. Department of Agriculture has a farm typology system that identifies farm types based on full time/part time/retired operators and gross sales. Small family farms are those that earn less than \$250,000 in gross sales. Small family farm operators are identified as limited-resource farmers, full- or part-time farmers, operators who have a farm as residential/lifestyle choice or those who are retired. Large family farms have gross sales between \$250,000 and \$499,999, and the operators report that they are full-time farmers. Very large family farms have gross sales of over \$500,000¹⁰.

In 2007, 96 farms in Greene County were considered large and very large family farms with sales of \$250,000 to over \$500,000. Sixty farms were identified as residential/lifestyle choice type operations, and 52 were considered retirement farms. Both of these types of farms earned less than \$250,000¹¹. These small farms contributed much less to overall agricultural sales which placed more emphasis on larger farms that produced more crops and income. This could be tied to increasing costs of operations and a shift from full-time to part-time farming as well as the move to more large scale farming operations.

Farm acreage has shifted in Greene County from 1997 to 2007. Of the 170,201 total acres in the county, 92,176 acres were farmed in 2007. This represented a steady decrease by 10.6 percent from 1997 when total acres farmed were reported as 103,201 acres (Figure 5). The majority of the acres farmed in Greene County have been by part-time farmers. In 2007, 61 percent of the total acreage farmed, or 56,277 acres, was by part-time farmers. This was a slight decrease from 1997 when 63 percent of the total acres farmed were farmed by part-time farmers (Figure 6).

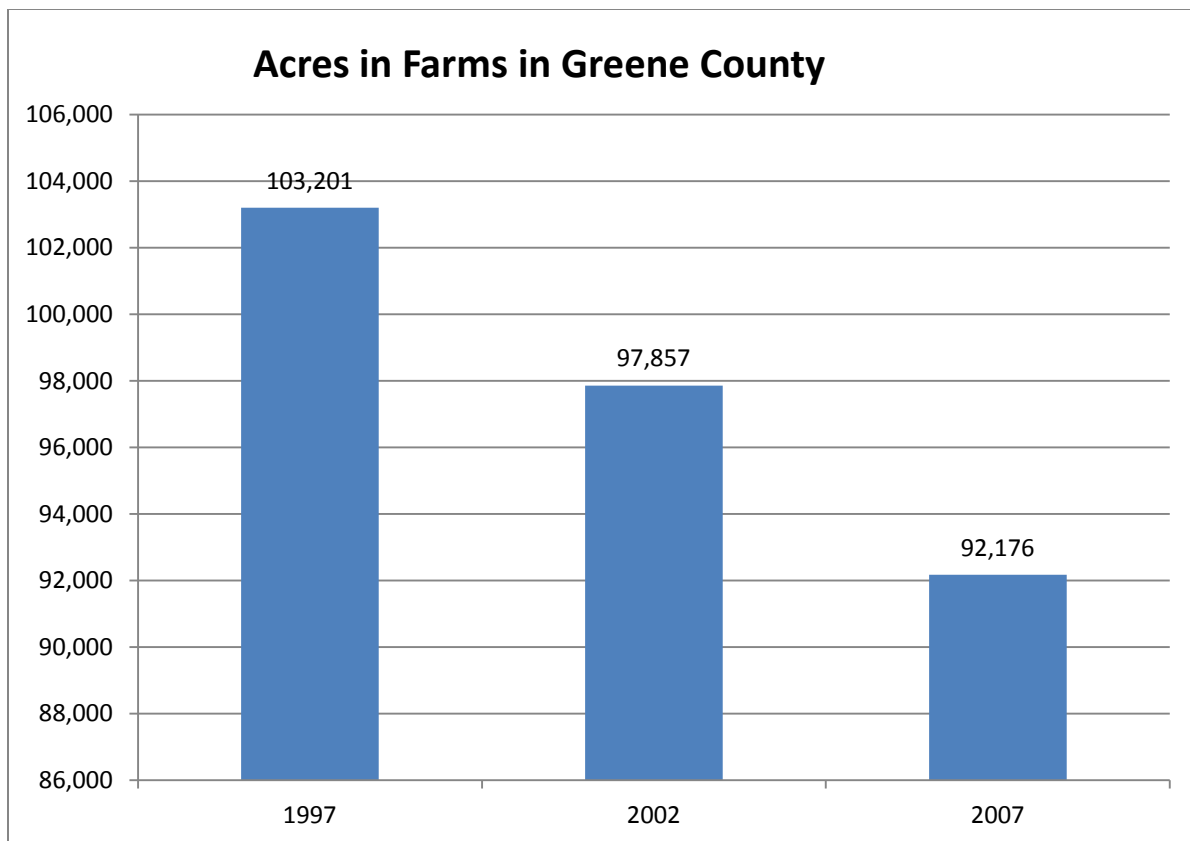


Figure 5. Acres in Farms. Source USDA Census of Agriculture 1997, 2002, 2007

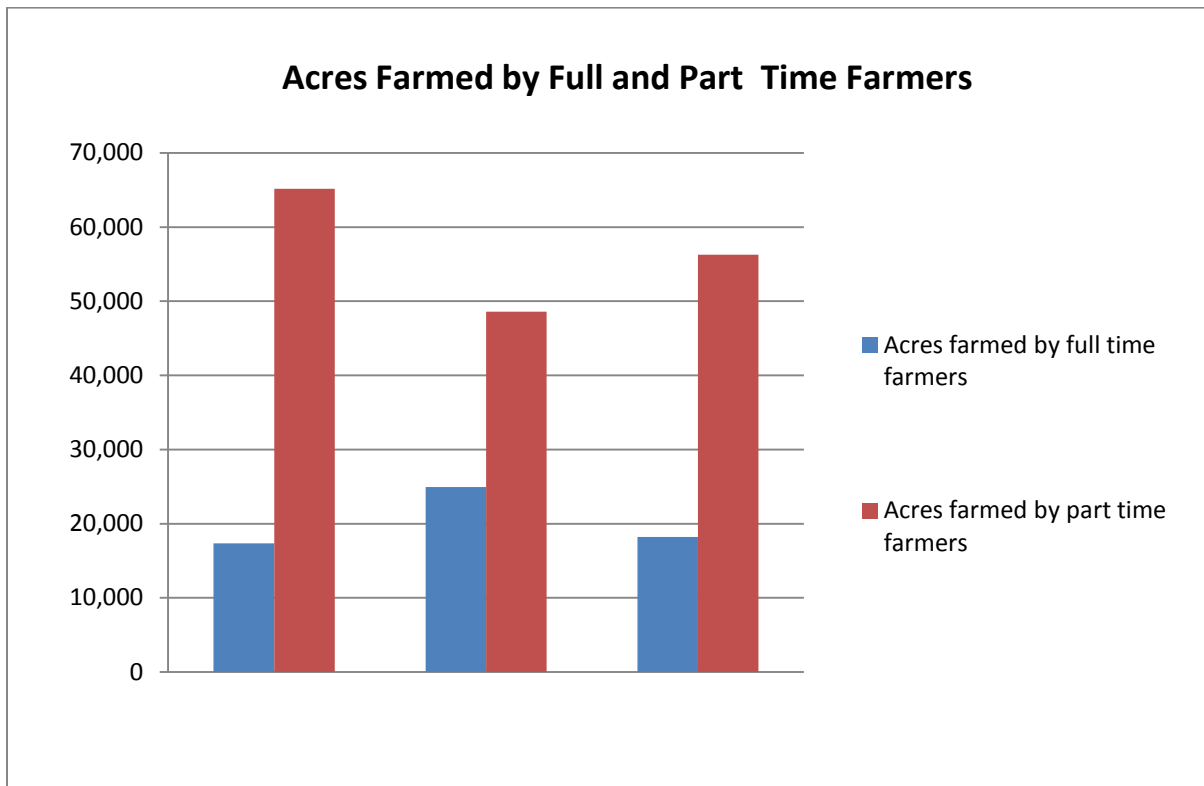


Figure 6. Acres Farmed by Full and Part-Time Farmers. Source: USDA Census of Agriculture 1997-2007

The number of farms in Greene County dropped from 313 farms in 1997 to 292 in 2007. This reflects a statewide trend of fewer acres in production as the economy of scale impacts the input and labor costs of agricultural operations. However, production of hogs, pigs and turkeys has ranked the county among the top producers in the state. The decrease in acreage could be tied to the efforts of the operators to diversify their operations by expanding into livestock.

In 1997, the 313 farms in the county had a total of 103,201 harvested acres. By 2002, the number of farms had decreased by 13.4 percent, and there were 97,857 acres being farmed. In 2007, the number of farms had increased slightly to 292, but the total acreage farmed had decreased again by 10.6 percent. The majority of the farms in the county in 2007 were small farms with 10 to 49 acres or large farms with 1,000 to 1,999 acres in cropland production ¹²(Table 2). This reiterates the growing divide between large and small farms as well as the difference noted earlier in the document for income earned on these farms.

Number of Farms	Acreage
8	1-9 acres
49	10-49 acres
18	50-69 acres
18	70-99 acres
6	100-139 acres
11	140-179 acres
10	180-219 acres
7	220-259 acres
21	260-499 acres
21	500-999 acres
27	1,000-1,999 acres
6	2,000 plus acres

Table 2. Greene County Farm Size Acreage. Source: USDA 2007 Census of Agriculture

Greene County Agriculture

Greene County is ranked as one of the top agricultural counties in the state. In 2009, the county ranked sixth for hogs and pigs raised and ninth for turkeys raised. That same year, it ranked 10th in the state for tobacco production and among the top 25 counties in the state for cotton, corn, soybeans and wheat production¹³.

The nascent aquaculture industry established itself in 2007 in Greene County, and the county was ranked 13th in the state for aquaculture that same year¹⁴. Forestry is also a major component of agriculture in Greene County, and more than 38 percent of the total county acreage was in forestry in 2002¹⁵. Many farmers and landowners have a combination of forest tracts and farmland, which provides additional income through proper management of both farmland and timberland.

Agriculture and forestry provide important ecosystem services to the environment and community. With proper management, agriculture can reduce soil erosion and help improve water quality. Agriculture and forestry also provide enhanced habitats for wildlife and contribute socially to the sense of place with fields and forests.

Crops

Greene County is among the top counties in the state for the production of tobacco, cotton, corn, soybeans and wheat. Agriculture is a business that has risks, and this has affected commodities grown. The historic drought of 1998-2002 had a significant impact on commodity production¹⁶.

Tobacco in Greene County, like in much of North Carolina, was once a primary crop, but with the elimination of the quota system, production numbers have decreased. From 1997 to 2007, production went from a high of 20,074,673 pounds produced on 179 farms to 11,108,717 pounds

produced on 49 farms¹⁷. The reduction coincided with the tobacco buyout program, which started in 2004. Many farmers opted out of tobacco production as a result of this legislation.

Since the buyout, tobacco companies have started contract farming for the golden leaf and have focused production in North Carolina because of the high quality leaf produced. Producers have obtained contracts with tobacco companies, and many have expanded their acreage as a result. The county is still one of the top producing counties in the state and ranked 10th in the state for flue-cured production in 2009. The county produced 15,788,000 pounds of tobacco in 2009, an increase of 19.1 percent from 2008¹⁸.

Cotton production in Greene County has experienced fluctuations in the number of farms, farm acreage and bales produced over the years. The number of farms that produced cotton dropped from 72 farms in 1997 to 29 farms in 2007 or almost 60 percent. In 1997, 25,131 bales were produced on 16,964 acres. This dropped to 17,803 bales produced on 20,302 acres in 2002. The drop in bales produced was tied to the devastating drought during 2002. However in 2007, Greene County increased its production of bales by 6,135 or 25.6 percent¹⁹. The increase could be tied to the market price improvement and an improved weather situation.

Corn, soybeans and wheat rounded out the top crops grown in the county in 2007. Figure 7 illustrates the variation in bushels produced for these commodities. All commodities experienced reduced production due to the severe drought of 1998- 2002. Market improvements caused corn to experience a recovery in 2007 with 37.6 percent more bushels produced than in 2002. Soybean production decreased 23.8 percent over the past 10 years. With the end of the drought, wheat made a strong comeback in 2007 with more than 52 percent more bushels produced than in 2002²⁰.

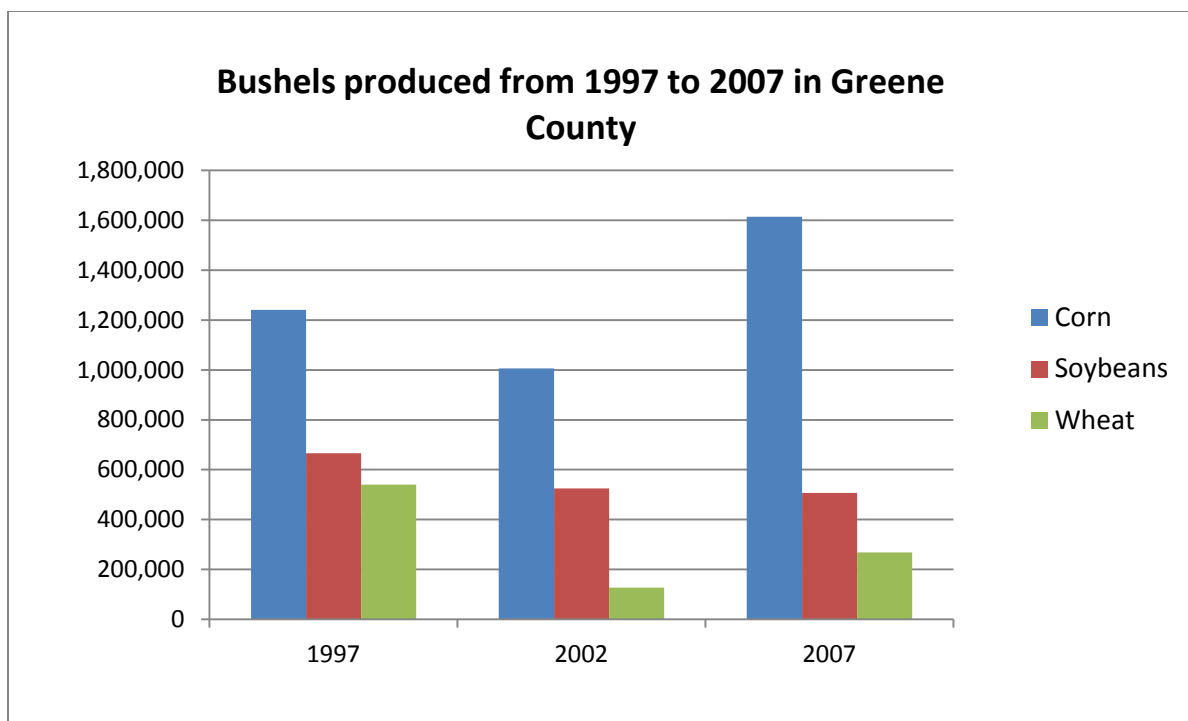


Figure 7. USDA Census of Agriculture Selected Crops Harvested 1997-2007

Vegetables, melons, potatoes and sweet potatoes have been a mainstay in the county for many years. In 2007, Greene ranked 26th in the state for vegetable, melon, potato and sweet potato production. The county has strong vegetable operations that sell at roadside stands, restaurants and at local and national markets. In 2007, there were 2,237 acres of vegetables harvested on 23 farms, the majority of which produced vegetables for fresh market²¹. The county is also home to two sweet potato processing facilities that sell to the national markets. These two facilities are among the top 25 employers in the county²².

Livestock

Livestock production is another major component of the agricultural economy in Greene County. Swine and turkey production are the major livestock components, and livestock operations have made Greene County one of the top producing counties in the state. Many producers have moved to livestock production as a way to expand their operations and diversify their operations.

In hog and pig production, the numbers have fluctuated in the past 10 years as seen in Figure 8. In 1997, there were 78 farms with an inventory of 391,672 hogs and pigs. Most of these hogs were on farms with more than 1,000 animals in inventory, indicating more intensive livestock operations. In 2002, there was an 11.9 percent increase in hogs and pigs in Greene County on 71 farms. In 2007, there was a 6 percent decrease in hogs and pigs produced in the county on 75

farms.²³ The fluctuation in the number of farms with hogs from 1997 to 2007 was tied to the exit of independent producers and to commodity prices. For 2009, The N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (NCDA&CS) anticipated that the county would have 315,000 hogs²⁴. Greene County was ranked 6th in the state for hog and pig production in 2009²⁵.

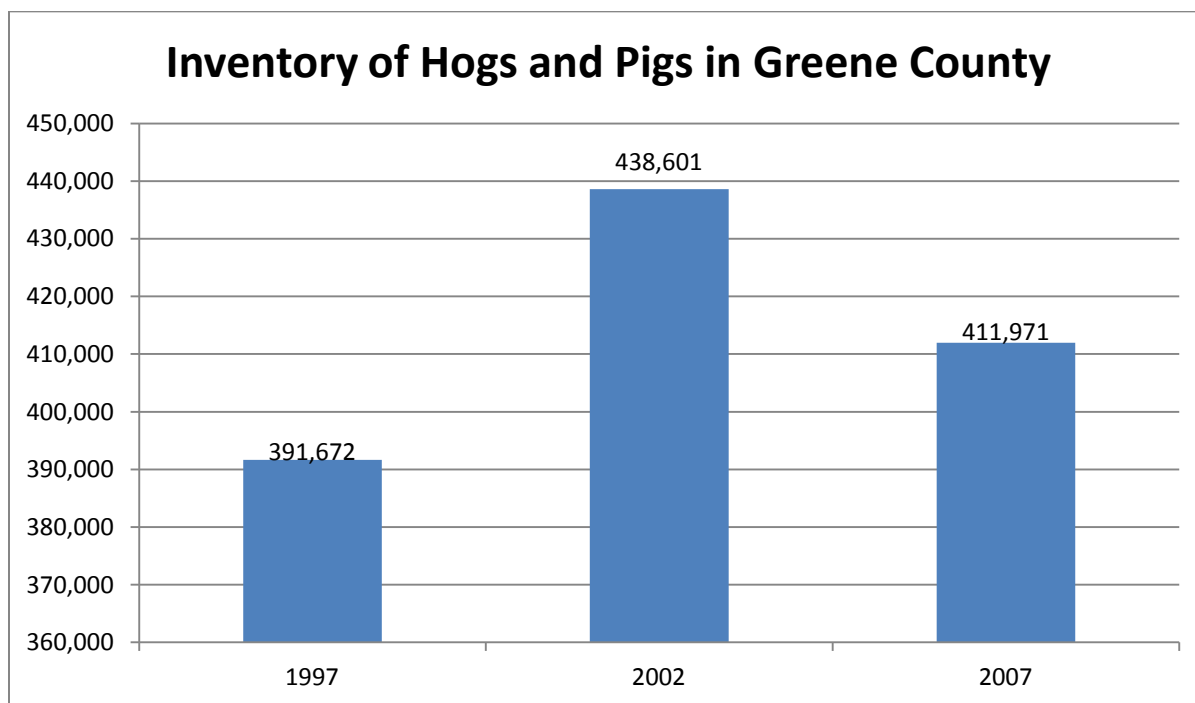


Figure 8. Hogs and Pigs-Inventory and Sales. Source: USDA Census of Agriculture 1997-2007

Poultry operations have been major entities in the county and were primarily made up of turkey and broiler production in Greene County. Figure 9 shows the variations in the poultry industry from 1997 to 2007. These fluctuations were market driven and affected by the decision of a major broiler integrator not to renew contracts during that time.

Despite these changes, poultry has remained a major industry. The county ranked 9th in the state for turkey production in 2009 according to NCDA&CS²⁶. Turkey production numbers have held relatively steady for the past 10 years with modest growth noted in the past five years. Production numbers rose because of expansion efforts by Butterball and Goldsboro Milling. It is expected that as Sanderson Farms expands in the region there will be a noticeable impact on the broiler industry and the potential job market. NCDA&CS estimated there were 1,099,000 turkeys in 2008 and 950,000 in 2009²⁷.

From 1997 to 2007, there was a decrease in broiler production from 941,600 to 335,000 or 64.4 percent. However, in 2008, NCDA&CS estimated there were 2,300,000 broilers produced²⁸.

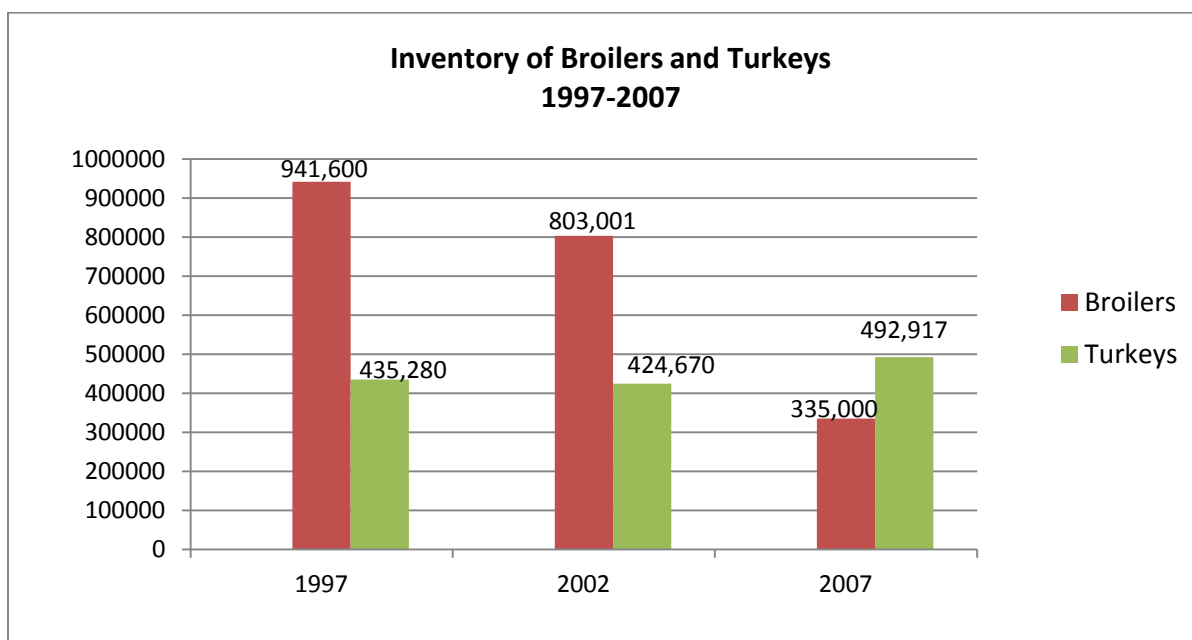


Figure 9. Poultry Inventory and Sales. Source: USDA Census of Agriculture 1997-2007

Aquaculture

The aquaculture industry, which is relatively new to Greene County, serves a niche market. The American Prawn Cooperative is made up of freshwater prawn producers in six counties, including Greene. The cooperative has a processing facility in Walstonburg where the prawns are quick frozen for sale. The facility completed construction in 2009 and produces 22,000 - 25,000 pounds of prawns a year. From May to September, the cooperative employs more than 100 workers, who work the ponds where the prawns grow and in the processing facility. The cooperative sells to restaurants and grocery stores nationally and internationally. This work has placed Greene County 13th in the state for aquaculture – a unique feature for a land locked county. In interviews in the county, it was apparent that the cooperative has provided diversification for producers.

Forestry

According to the 1980 USDA Soil Survey of Greene County, farmers owned 67 percent of the forested land in the county²⁹. The N.C. Forest Service reported that in 2002 more than 38 percent of the county was in forest, and all of this timberland was privately owned. The USDA National Woodland Owner Survey determined that the forest acreage in the state was split evenly between being part of a farm or standing alone in 2006 (Figure 10)³⁰. In interviews with the N.C. Forest Service Greene County in 2011, the county ranger confirmed that this is still the situation in the county.³¹ Those that responded to the National Woodland Owner Survey were 65

to 75+ years of age, which confirmed the state and countywide trends of an aging producer/landowner population³².

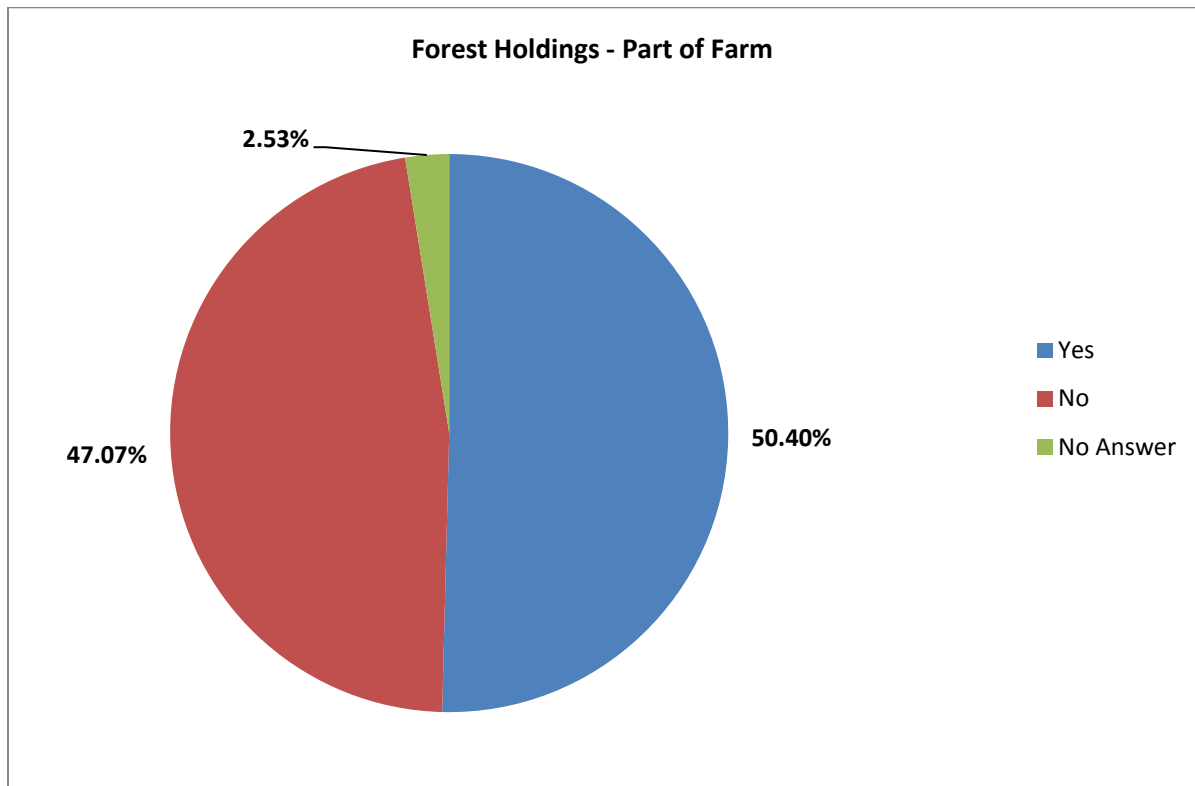


Figure 10. Source: USDA Woodland Owners Survey 2006

With the owners of forestland growing older, there has been a shift in ownership of forestland in North Carolina. The N.C. Forestry Assessment was completed in 2009 as one of the requirements of the 2008 Farm Bill. This assessment noted that timberland ownership in the state was shifting from private individuals to private corporate ownership³³.

Due to the long-term investment nature of timber, many investment firms have found forestland attractive for the long-term strategies of portfolios. Along with outdoor recreation, forests provide wood products and protect soil and water quality. Trees are harvested periodically to provide additional income and maintain the health of the timber. Landowners in the county received \$1,426,685 for standing timber, or stumpage, in 2009. The timber in Greene County brought \$2,731,989 in 2009 for timber buyers when sold to the mills, which is known as delivered value³⁴. These values were down from \$1,639,216 in stumpage and \$2,894,432 in delivered value in 2008³⁵. The global economic crisis has affected the forestry industry, and prices have been slow to recover.

Just over 28 percent of the forested acres in North Carolina had a current forest management plan according to the USDA Woodland Owners Survey in 2006. Forest management plans are necessary for property to be enrolled in the county's Present Use Value taxation program, and well- managed forests enable landowners to receive better value for their timber. In interviews in Greene County, forest management plans were touted as a valuable tool for landowners.

Economy

Agriculture and agribusiness are major forces in the economy of Greene County. As one interviewee remarked, "Agriculture is the bread and butter of Greene County." According to Mike Walden, N.C. State University's Extension economist, agriculture and agribusiness industries contributed \$173,139,080 of total income to the county's economy in 2008. Its share of the county value added was almost 50 percent. Agriculture and agribusiness were also among the top employers in the county. Walden reported that more than 28 percent of employment in the county was tied to agriculture and agribusiness³⁶.

These employment numbers include all aspects of the agriculture such as processing facilities, forestry and manufacturing of value-added products. The N.C. Employment Security System ranked agriculture third for employment among all industries in the county for the third quarter of 2010. The N.C. Department of Corrections was the top employer in the county during this time period³⁷.

Farm labor expenses have a more immediate impact on farmers since this is often a necessary expenditure. Agriculture hired 103 farm laborers in 2007, which was 36 percent fewer than in 2002. However, the cost of that labor went up by \$731,000 from 2002 to 2007 when payroll was \$8,767,000³⁸. These increasing costs have added to the production expenses, which, in turn, have cut into their profit margins.

Across the state, counties employ a present land use taxation program to enable agricultural, forestry and horticultural land to be taxed at its present-use value instead of its market value. Bona fide agricultural and forested lands are allowed to defer to a lower tax rate, which offers protection for continued present use. In Greene County in 2010, there were 2,191 land parcels representing approximately 127,586.79 acres of farms and forests enrolled in the Present Use Value program (PUV). This represents 76.5 percent of the total land area, reinforcing the value of agriculture to Greene County³⁹.

Citizens of every county pay taxes to provide services to the county as a whole. Property taxes provide a bulk of the revenue for sheriff services, emergency medical services, schools and other county-related services. But there is a disparity that exists for the cost of services that are received by farms and those received by residential developments. In studies done across the state, residential development required more services than what it pays. Commercial development and farmland required less. Table 3 shows the results from counties studied. This table represents a wide range of counties in the state, in terms of population and size, but the

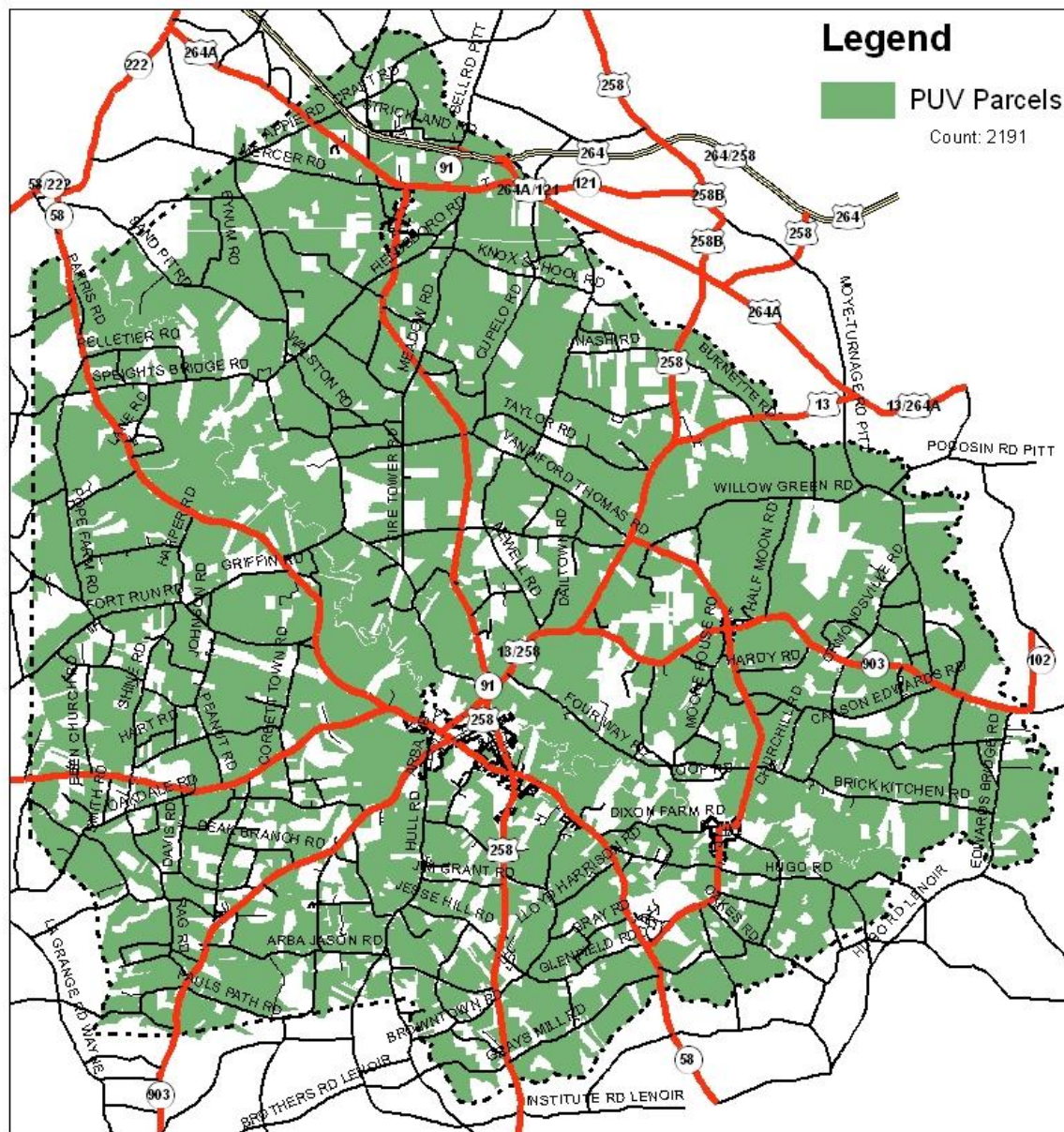
trend is similar and can be extrapolated for Greene County and others in Eastern North Carolina. An effort has begun to conduct such studies to reinforce the importance of planned development and farmland preservation in counties in the eastern part of the state.

County	Residential	Commercial/Industrial	Farm/Forestland	Source
Chatham	\$1.11	\$.47	\$.92	Renkow, 1998
Wake	\$1.54	\$.18	\$.47	Renkow, 2001
Union	\$1.30	\$.41	\$.24	Dorfman, 2004
Orange	\$1.31	\$.24	\$.72	Renkow, 2006
Alamance	\$1.47	\$.23	\$.59	Renkow, 2006
National AVG	\$1.15	\$.29	\$.37	AFT, 2006

Table 3. Source: NCDA&CS ADFP Trust Fund 2008 Annual Report

As the national economic crisis slowly resolves itself, many counties have worked hard to avoid raising property taxes. Greene County has maintained its 2009-2010 property tax rate of \$0.756 per \$100 value for the 2010-2011 fiscal year⁴⁰. In 2007, farm owners paid \$1, 121,000 in property taxes to the county , a decrease of 5.4 percent from payments in 2002⁴¹. The economic base of county depends heavily on property taxes, and agriculture is a great contributor. There are few other industries to contribute to the tax base as agriculture does.

Tax parcel records from the Greene County Tax Office indicate the location of properties that contain all or part of a farm or forest (see Figure 11).



Greene County Present Use Value Parcels



Figure 11. Greene PUV Parcels. Source: Greene County Tax Office

To maintain viability, many farmers in the county have to rent additional land to support expansion efforts and to continue to make a profit as expenses increase. According to the NCDA&CS, the state average rent per acre was \$48.00 in 2009. High agricultural productive land averaged \$66.90 per acre in the state; medium agricultural productive land averaged \$45.60; and low agricultural productive land averaged \$31.50 per acres⁴².

Greene County is in District 80, a designation from the NCDA&CS that organizes counties by similar agriculture and geography. Other counties in this district include Beaufort, Carteret, Craven, Hyde, Johnston, Jones, Lenoir, Pamlico, Pitt, Wayne and Wilson. In 2009, the average rent in the district was \$78.70 for high productive land, \$55.70 for medium productive land and \$41.40 for low productive land⁴³. Greene County land rental prices have remained within the average district prices as these prices have changed little over the past four years with the exception of high productive land (Figure 12). High productive land received the most cash rent over the years, but dropped by 6.6 percent from 2007 to 2009. Medium and low productive land rents have remained relatively stable in this time period. These prices have an impact on agriculture since they contribute to production costs.

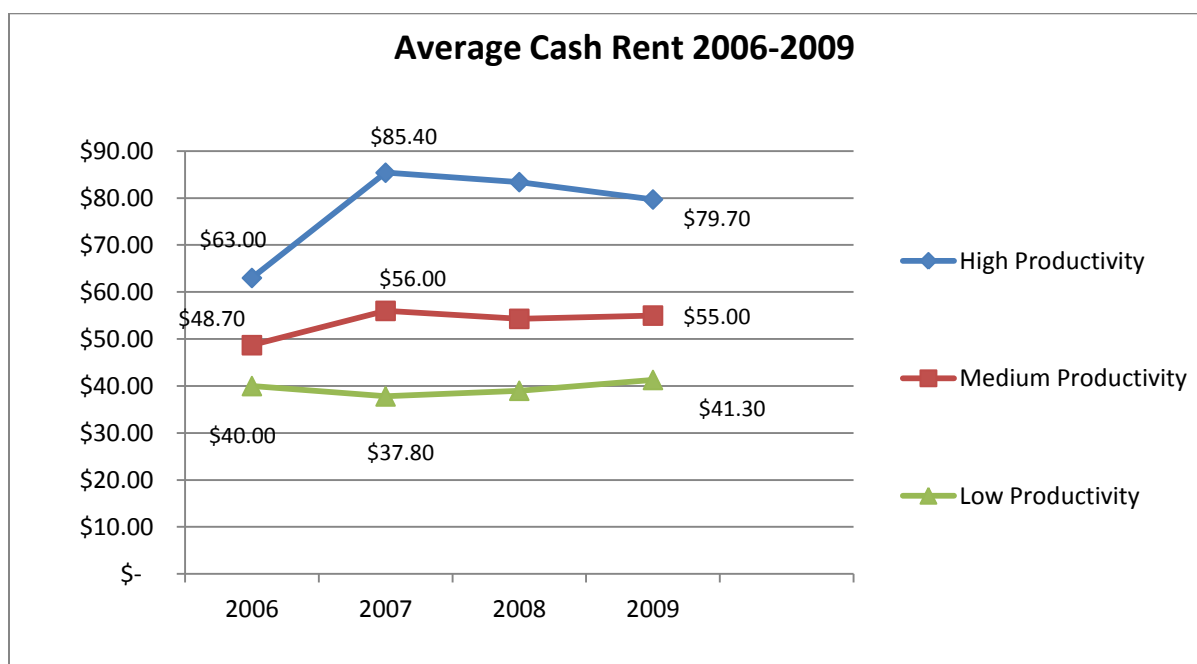


Figure 12. Average Cash Rents. Source: NCDA&CS Agricultural Statistics 2006-2009

In Greene County, profit margins for producers have narrowed over the years. Costs of production have always exceeded net income (Figure 13). The difference between income and

production costs has been significant with the average difference of 77.6 percent over the past 10 years, and costs have continued to climb due to global markets. Production costs include fertilizers, agricultural chemicals, seeds, feed, taxes, gas and fuel, livestock and poultry purchases, cash rent for land and buildings, leases for equipment and other similar costs associated with agriculture. There was a 14.5 percent increase in farm expenses between 1997 and 2007⁴⁴.

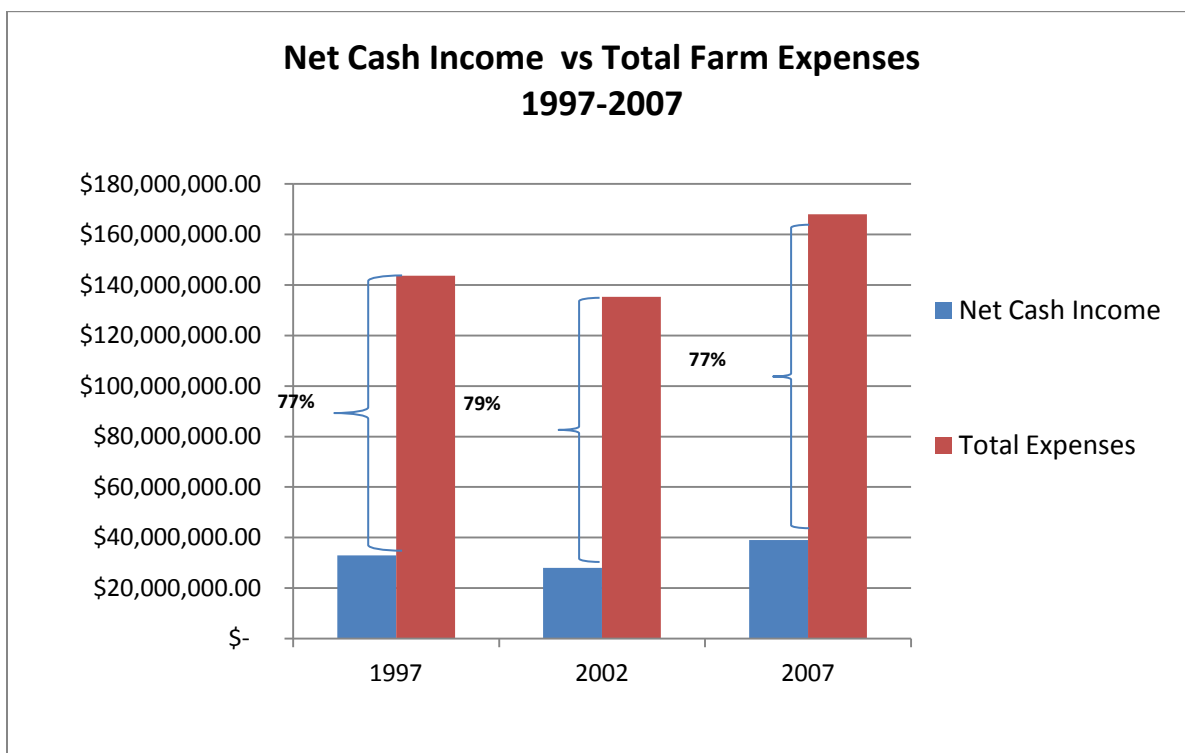


Figure 13. Total Farm Production Expenses and Net Cash Income. Source: USDA Census of Agriculture 1997-2007

Demographics of County and Operators

The rural nature of Greene County is reflected in the US Census with most of the population documented as rural in the 2000 US Census and this is still considered the case in 2010. In 2000, there were 71.6 persons per square mile in the 265 square miles of the county, qualifying Greene County as rural⁴⁵. However, the most recent data available from the N.C. Department of Commerce's profile of Greene County showed that a majority of the population was considered non- farm in 2000. More than 18,000 people, nearly 97 percent of the population, lived in non-incorporated areas of the county in 2000, but only 613, or 3.2 percent, lived on farms⁴⁶. This places agriculture at a disadvantage as the population continues to shift away from the farm.

This will become especially crucial as legislative representation shifts from rural to more urban communities. When people move away from the farm and the state becomes more urban, the

issues that face rural communities and agriculture become less prevalent than the issues facing the majority of the population.

In Greene County, almost 64 percent of the population worked outside the county and drove 27 minutes to work in 2000. The unemployment rate in the county was 9.2 percent in the fourth quarter of 2010⁴⁷ and rose to 10.5 percent in March 2011⁴⁸. The county was 54.3 percent male in 2009. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the county was 50.8 percent white and 37.3 percent black and 14.3 percent Hispanic⁴⁹.

Producers in the county have changed in demographics as seen in Table 4. From 1997 to 2007, the number of producers who listed farming as their primary occupation dropped 23 percent. Concurrently, the number of producers who indicated that farming was a secondary occupation rose 32 percent. Clearly, agriculture in Greene County is shifting to part-time farm operations. The average age of a farmer has steadily increased by 6.3 years during this same time period to more than 20 years older than the average Greene County resident. While most farmers are white, there has been an increase in Black or African American farmers and farmers of more than one race.

	1997	2002	2007
Number of operators with farming as primary occupation	220	220	169
Number of operators with farming as secondary occupation	93	51	123
Average operator age	51.5	53.9	57.8
Principal operators by sex:			
<i>Male</i>	310	245	273
<i>Female</i>	21	26	19
All operators by race			
<i>American Indian or Alaska Native</i>	NA	NA	1
<i>Asian</i>	NA	NA	NA
<i>Black or African American</i>	NA	9	12
<i>White</i>	NA	365	375
<i>More than one race</i>	NA	NA	8
<i>All operators of Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino Origin</i>	NA	6	2

Table 4 Demographics of Greene County Farmers Source: USDA Census of Agriculture 1997, 2002, 2007

In an effort to further understand the state of agriculture in Greene County, surveys and interviews were conducted with three target populations: agricultural producers, non-producers and agribusinesses. These groups provided expertise and insight on the current state of agriculture, emerging trends in agriculture, and existing and perceived opportunities and challenges to agriculture.

Planners, elected officials and agencies that work with the farm and forestry communities need to acknowledge and examine these changes, trends, challenges and opportunities. By understanding agriculture's place in the county, county leaders can make decisions to preserve family farms and forests as well as to promote rural development.

Farm Operators and Land Owners Agricultural Survey

Respondent Profile

Producers and landowners were surveyed to gather more information about the state of agriculture in Greene County. Surveys were distributed at meetings and workshops as well as on line at www.SurveyMonkey.com. Interviews with individual farmers and landowners also provided insight into agriculture in the county.

The average age of producers who responded to the surveys was 53.1 years, which is younger than the county average of 57.8 years of age. All of the producers who responded to the surveys had been in operation for more than 20 years and were, on average, the third generation on their farm. Seventy-five percent of the producers stated that they planned to continue to operate for 20 or more years (Figure 14). Considering the average age of the respondents, this is cause for concern and indicates a need for farm transition and retirement planning.

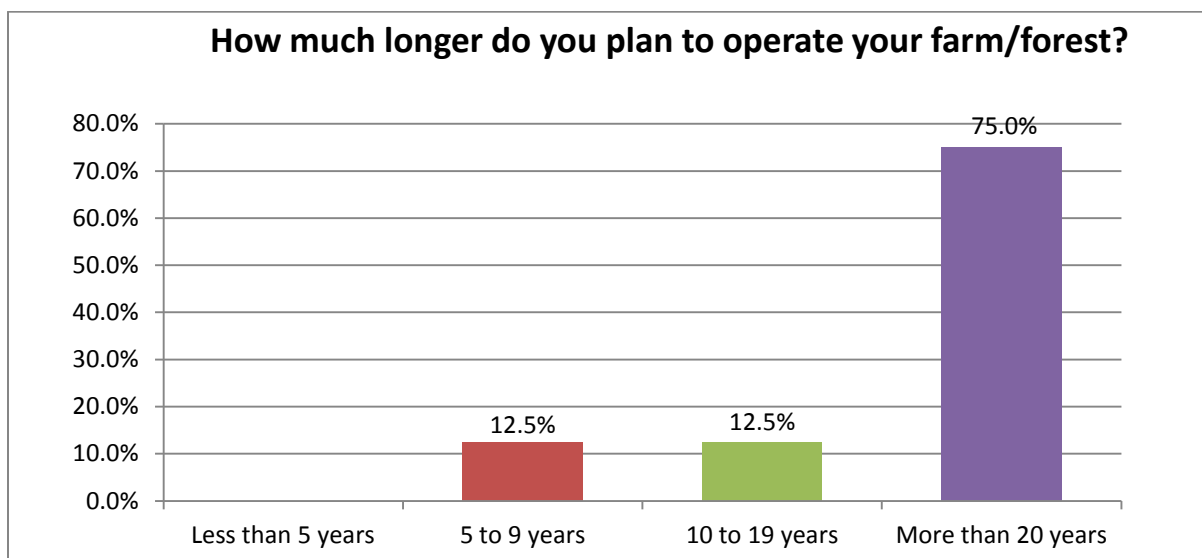


Figure 14. Source: MOC Producer Survey 2011

Of those surveyed, 70 percent reported that farming is his or her primary occupation. However, 80 percent of those surveyed stated that more than 50 percent of their income comes from farm or forest operations (Figure 15). This indicates that only 20 percent rely on other sources for the majority of their income.

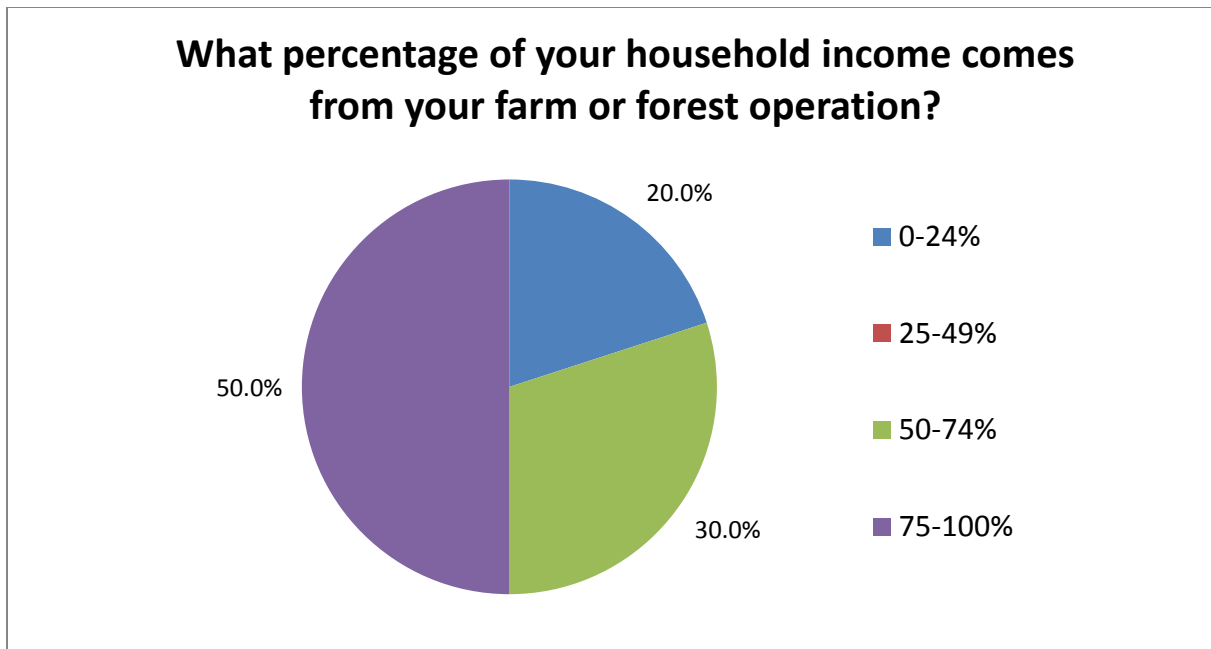


Figure 15. Source: MOC Producer Survey 2011

The average size farm of respondents is 1,132.7 acres, which is more than the county average of 312 acres reported in the USDA Census of Agriculture for 2007. Seventy percent of the respondents reported that the operation was primarily a farm with some timber production. These farms had an average of 131.5 acres of timberland. Livestock operations were also represented in the survey. Swine production was the main type of operation represented in the surveys with an average of 5,700 hogs on the farm.

Sixty percent did not expand their operations in the last five years, and 75 percent said the primary reason was the lack of available land to rent. More than 60 percent said in the surveys that they did not own sufficient land to expand or diversify. As noted earlier in this document, farmers often rent land to expand their operations. Other items that prohibit expansion efforts are a low profit margin and labor issues (Figure 16). None of those surveyed leased their land for hunting/fishing, cell towers, military operations or mining. Many of those interviewed said that the economic crisis has affected expansion plans.

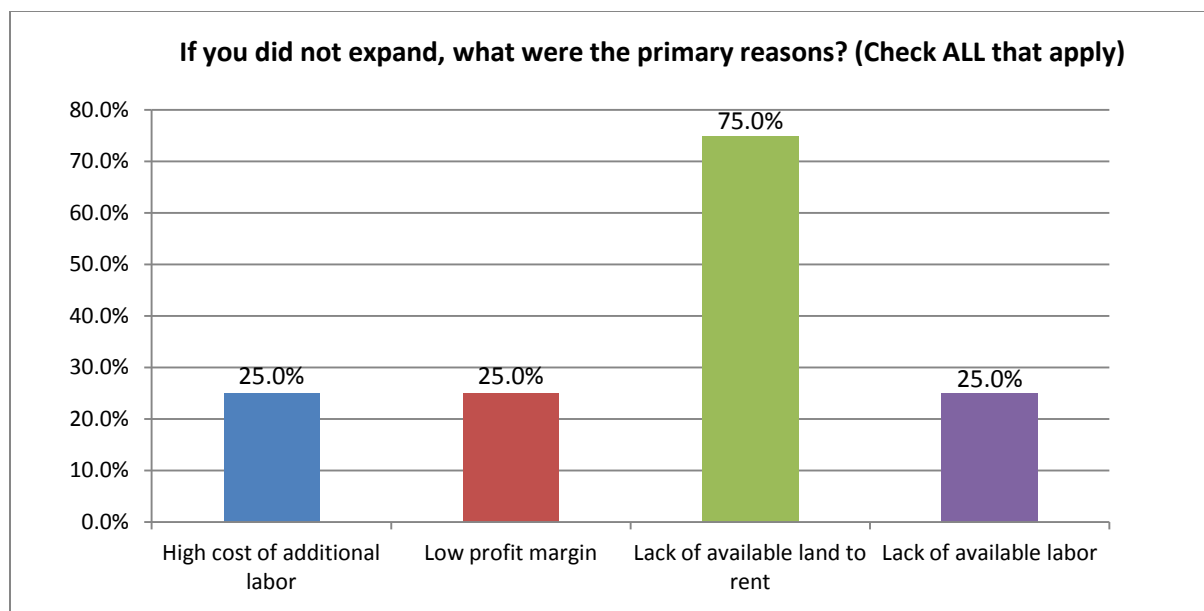


Figure 16. Source: MOC Producer Survey 2011

Costs

Greene County is a rural county with a small industry base, which means property taxes represent the biggest revenue source for county operations and services. Since agriculture is the major industry in the county, the majority of the revenue comes from taxing farm and forest operations. Almost 89 percent of the farmers surveyed identified local property tax on buildings and equipment as the most unreasonable burden. Over 66 percent said local property taxes on land were also a drain on their operations. Interviews with local producers confirmed property tax as a burden for farmers as well as a deterrent for young people to go into agriculture.

The county has a Present Use Value Taxation program (PUV) that can reduce the amount of property tax on qualified farms and forests. However, 25 percent of those surveyed were not sure that their farms and forests were enrolled in the county's PUV. More than 66 percent also indicated that their forests did not have timber management plans, which are required for forestland to participate in PUV.

Other challenges to farm profitability were increasing production costs, regulatory costs and labor. One interviewed producer noted that most other industries are able to pass on the increasing cost of labor and regulations in a charge on their products, but a farmer is rarely able to do so. The USDA H2A program was cited in interviews as a valuable program for many farmers, but the regulations were viewed as expensive. Verification of workers' legal status is one cost associated with the program that was noted as a drawback to the program.

The newly enacted Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) certification has the attention of many producers in the county who grow produce. This certification is to guarantee food safety for the consumer and is becoming required more often for producers to market their produce. This is

another cost that producers must incur to remain viable. However, 62.5 percent of those surveyed said they had not sought out GAP certification. Interviews confirmed that producers are aware of the program but had made no movement towards certification.

Community Support

Greene County farmers and landowners felt that agriculture was supported in the county and stated that citizens recognize agriculture's importance. In interviews, the increased awareness of local food and farms along with agriculture's importance to the economy and citizens' well being were noted as indicators of that support. Over 66 percent of the survey respondents noted that they had not experienced problems with neighbors over farming or forestry operations. Of those who had experienced problems, dumping/littering, slow moving vehicles and chemical uses were listed as the main complaints received.

In interviews with local producers, all stated that the Board of Commissioners was well aware of agriculture and most felt that agriculture's voice was heard in the decisions the board made. County agencies that support agriculture, such as N.C. Cooperative Extension, Soil and Water Conservation District and the N.C. Forest Service, were all cited as resources producers use. Producers rely on these agencies for certifications, the latest information and data on crops and livestock, and other necessary information for family farms to remain profitable. Other groups cited to be of assistance were the N.C. Farm Bureau and the N.C. Soybean Association.

However, knowledge of programs that many of these agencies offer to landowners and producers was notably lacking. Most producers surveyed were aware of the PUV program in the county. Knowledge of other agricultural preservation programs were not as well defined (Figure 17).

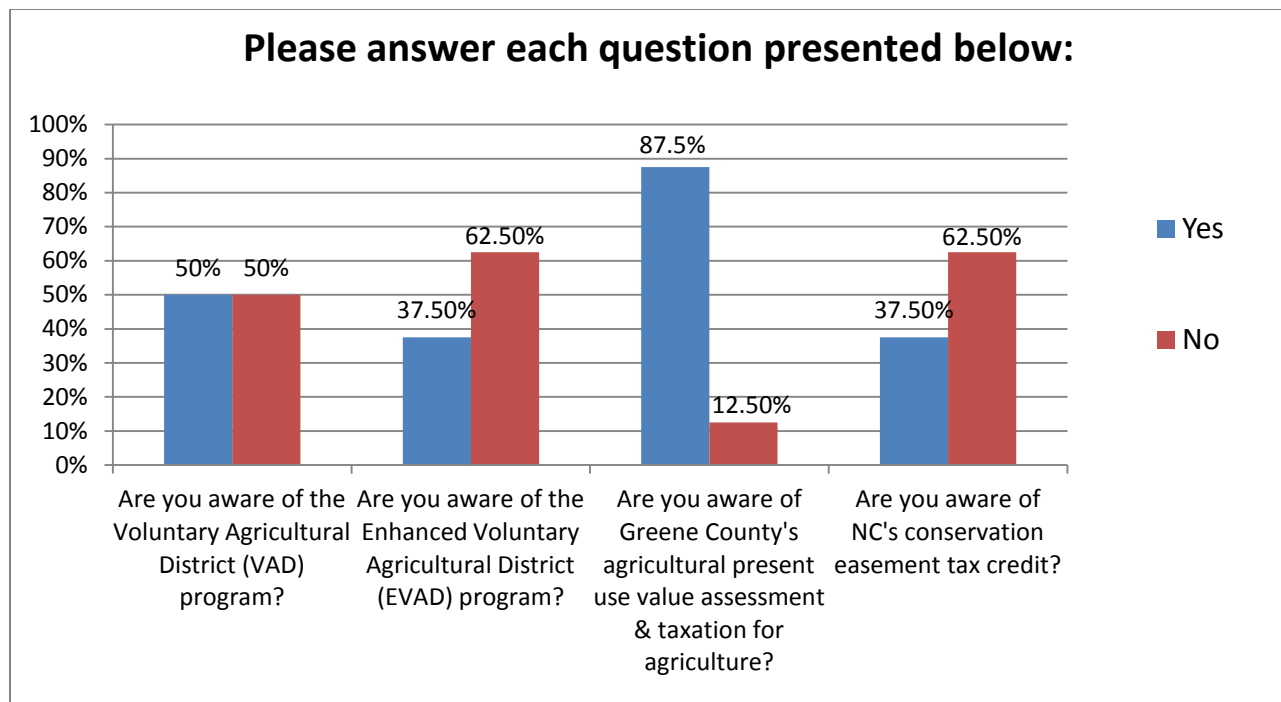


Figure 17. Source: MOC Producer Survey 2011

Agribusinesses and services for agriculture are fragmented in the county. For those producers under contract for turkey and chicken production, many services such as veterinary care are supplied as part of the contract. In interviews, livestock owners noted that there was not a large animal veterinarian in the county. Others who were interviewed noted they had to drive to Kinston or further for supplies. Mail order supplies were often cited as another source of materials for operations. This shortage of services contributes to the difficulties of farm and forest operations.

The Future Trends in Agriculture in Greene County

Family farms continue to struggle to remain profitable; however, the strength of agriculture and its future is strong in Greene County as noted in data collected. Over 62 percent of producers surveyed anticipate that their production will increase in the next five to 10 years. In interviews, it was noted that the move to more local foods presents and the general movement toward larger and niche farms in the county provide an opportunity for expansion.

As noted in this document, producers in the county see production and regulatory costs as the biggest hurdles to expansion of their operations. These issues and others will influence what happens to agriculture in the future (Figure 18). Interviews with local farmers also noted that the global market has a huge effect on local operations. The general public often doesn't recognize this. Another issue that producers who were interviewed noted was the limit to what

they could do currently on their farms. Many of these producers operate small farms with some family members assisting. For them, growth and expansion are just not feasible.

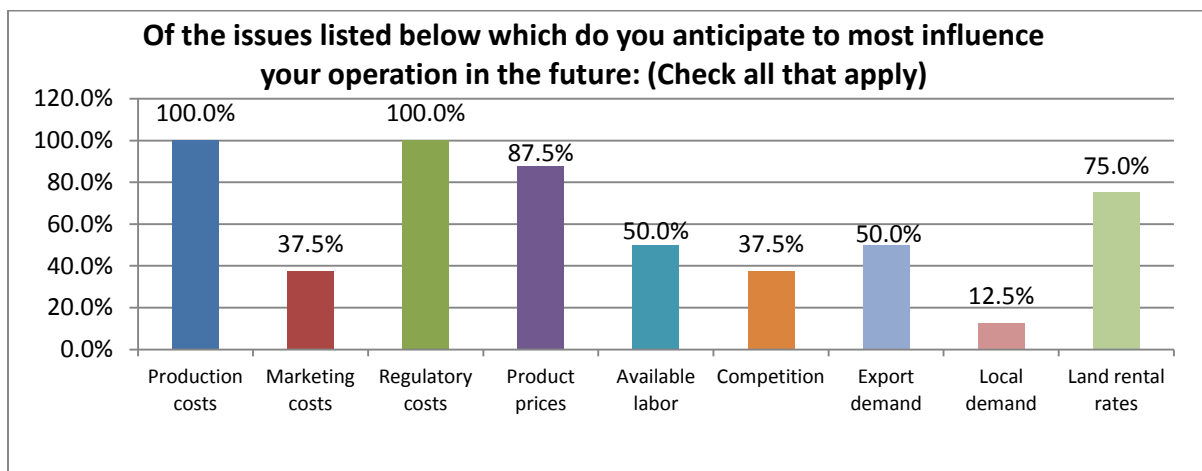


Figure 18. Source MOC Producer Survey 2011

The majority (90 percent) of farmers surveyed expect to transfer the farm to other family members to continue farming. Only 10 percent expect that the land they transferred to family members would be used in non-farm operations. However, 66.7 percent of those surveyed did not have a farm transition plan in place. Interviews with producers in the county confirmed this.

Despite this, producers were well aware of the need for transition planning and estate planning. The estate tax was identified by 44 percent of those surveyed as a burdensome tax on farmers. According to surveys and interviews, discussions with family members about farm transition have occurred, but actual plans for farm transition have not been written. In some cases, a will was mentioned as a farm transition plan. Over 51 percent of those surveyed expressed interest in assistance with farm transition and estate planning for their land.

Producers in Greene County recognize that they need to adapt and change as the world changes around them. Agritourism is a growing aspect of agriculture. Farm tours, pick-your-own operations, hay rides and similar activities are part of a growing trend for people to connect with local farms and forests. More than 66 percent of producers surveyed felt that agritourism was an expansion/ diversification opportunity in Greene County, and 57 percent of those surveyed expressed interest in assistance with development of agritourism activities.

Economic development was identified as another crucial piece of maintaining agriculture's profitability. All of those surveyed felt that it was important for economic development to support agriculture and agribusinesses in Greene County. As interest in local foods grows and more producers look at ways to diversify, promotion of those products is crucial to the success of the farms. Seventy-one percent of those surveyed indicated they would be interested in regional branding of products. Over 71 percent of those who responded to the survey stated

they would like assistance in business planning which could help expansion efforts. Nearly 90 percent (88.9 percent) of those surveyed support the development of outlets for local products, such as the farmers' market, Community Supported Agriculture and agricultural fairs or festivals. One hundred percent said that they would consider changing or diversifying their operations to take advantage of these new outlets.

Farmers also saw the need for additional training to help meet these new opportunities. Over 85 percent of the producers surveyed indicated they would like more training on sales and marketing. Interviews with local producers also echoed this need. GAP certification training is of interest to 87.5 percent of farmers surveyed.

Community support of agriculture needs to be nurtured, according to those surveyed. Over 87 percent of those producers surveyed stated they felt that the non-farm citizens of the county should be educated on the economic and social contributions of farms and forests. Producers in Greene County felt that agriculture and forestry should be promoted as viable career opportunities and felt strongly that agriculture and forestry should be taught throughout the education system (Figure 19).

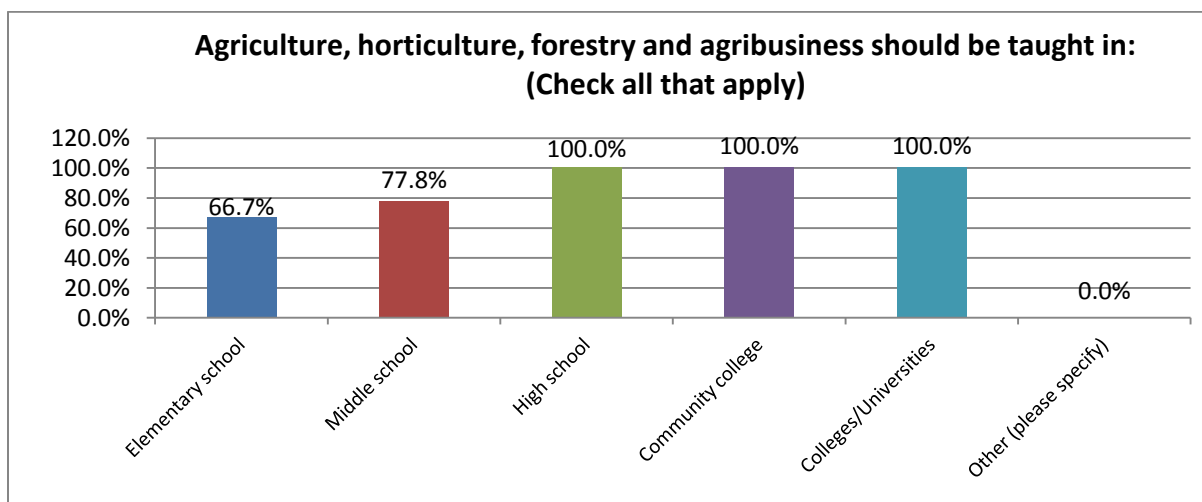


Figure 19. Source: MOC Producer Survey 2011

Other needs that were identified by producers surveyed were:

- 71.4 percent would like assistance on timber management, pine straw sales, development of a forestry management plan and selection of a consulting forester.
- 85.7 percent would like training on how to apply for federal and state contracts for their products. Proximity to Seymour Johnson Air Force Base presents a potential market.
- 50 percent said they would like technical training on the production of biofuel feedstock or woody biomass.
- 62.7 percent said there was a need for a commodity processing or a distribution center in Greene County.

Agribusinesses

The goods and services that agribusinesses provide are critical to the success of agriculture and forestry. The symbiosis of these industries is critical to the success of each. Agribusinesses in the county are also feeling the pinch of the economic crisis. The surveys that were completed and interviews conducted in the county present a snapshot of what these businesses are facing.

The agribusinesses surveyed and interviewed ranged from nurseries/greenhouse operators to agricultural consultants to equipment repair to insurance/financial institutions. Many of the businesses surveyed have full- and part-time employees and have been in operation for 10 to more than 20 years.

Half the survey respondents reported that they get all of their business from the farming community in Greene County. Seventy-five percent stated that they currently sell, market or contract products or services to state and federal organizations, the military, hospitals, schools and other public institutions. All reported that they had increased their operation size in the last five years.

In order to meet the growth in their operation size, 75 percent reported that they added service area to hold or expand their market size and also increased their agricultural inventories and sales in the past five years. This expansion will not stop in the coming years. Half of the businesses surveyed expect to increase their operation size in the next five years. However, they do not expect to increase the number of employees at their businesses.

In order to meet this anticipated growth, half the survey respondents stated they expect to add new product lines or services for farm/forestry operators. Seventy-five percent said they would also add new product lines or services for non-farmers. Just as farmers seek out diversification to increase their profits, so do agribusinesses.

Since agribusinesses work so closely with farmers and landowners, their observation of trends in agriculture can help them plan for those changes. One hundred percent of those interviewed noted an increase in the number of larger farms, while 75 percent saw a decrease in the number of small farms in the county. Other trends that were noted were a shift to more sophisticated farming operations and more diversification among farms (Figure 20). Because of these observed trends, 100 percent of those agribusinesses surveyed said they would modify their businesses to adapt to these changes.

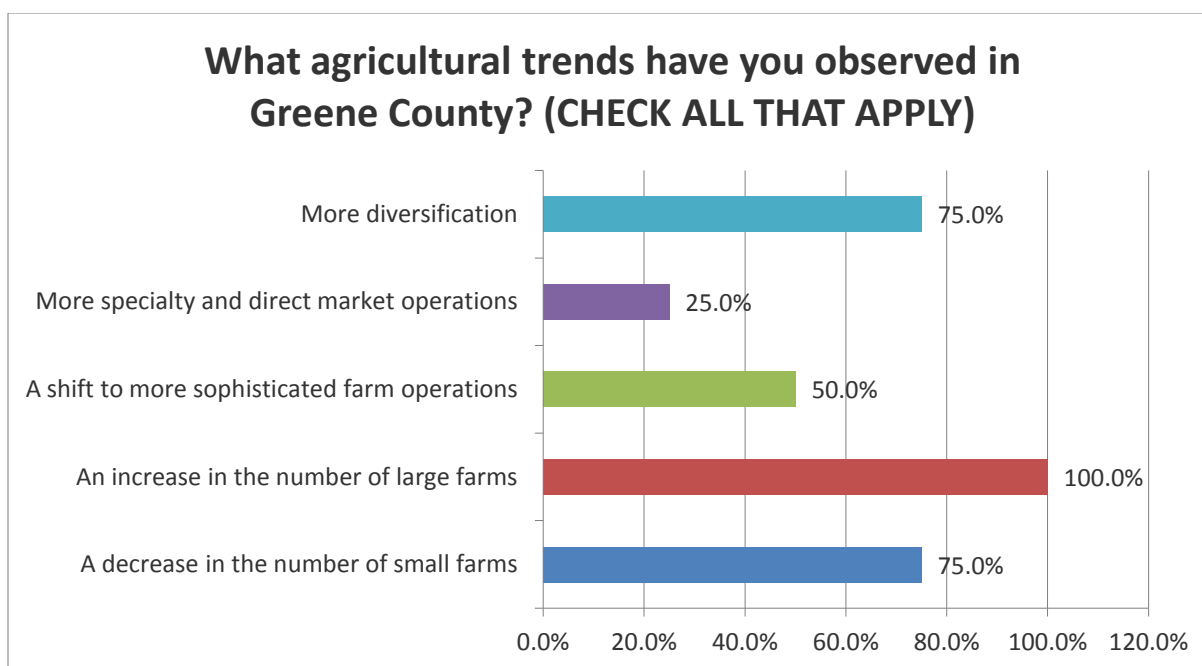


Figure 20. Source: MOC Agribusiness Survey 2011

Other trends or issues that agribusinesses have observed in Greene County:

- Biofuels are emerging as a potential economic engine for agriculture/agribusinesses in Greene County.
- Transition/estate planning is an issue facing farmers/landowners and agribusinesses in Greene County.
- Agritourism could be an expansion/diversification opportunity for agriculture/agribusiness in Greene County.

In interviews, agribusinesses noted that Greene County was a strong agricultural county and felt that agriculture would continue to be the mainstay of the county. These responses echo the same responses from producers and non-farm residents interviewed in the county. Interviews revealed that agriculture is in a global market with global competition.

Agribusinesses face similar challenges as farmers in the county. One hundred percent of those surveyed felt that agriculture and agribusinesses should be seen as viable career opportunities. In order to promote these opportunities, business owners felt that there was a need for youth agriculture education in Greene County schools. Community support is viewed as important for agribusinesses in the county. All agribusinesses owners surveyed felt there needed to be consumer education on the economic impact of buying "local" in Greene County.

Agribusinesses indicated similar challenges to profitability that farmers face. Even with plans to expand their businesses in the next five years, the agribusinesses that were surveyed stated they

would not add additional labor. Like farmers, 50 percent of agribusinesses reported that lack of capital was the main deterrent to the labor issue (Figure 21). Training was also cited as a need to help these businesses remain viable. The top training need was in new technology in agriculture and forestry and in financing (Figure 22).

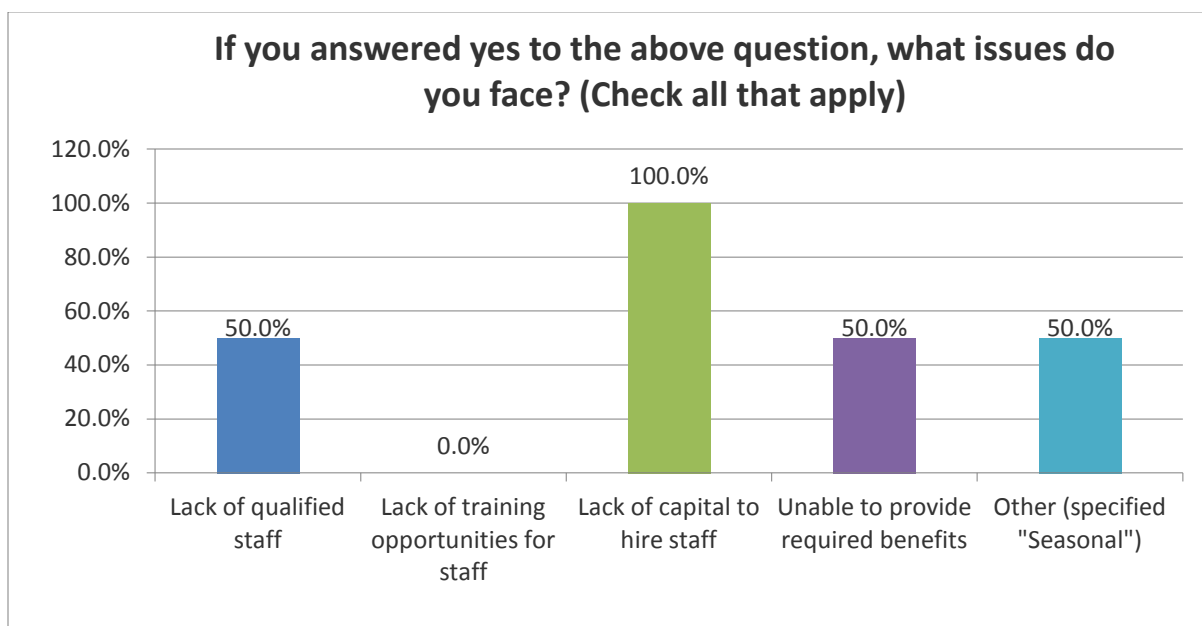


Figure 21. Source: MOC Agribusiness Survey 2011

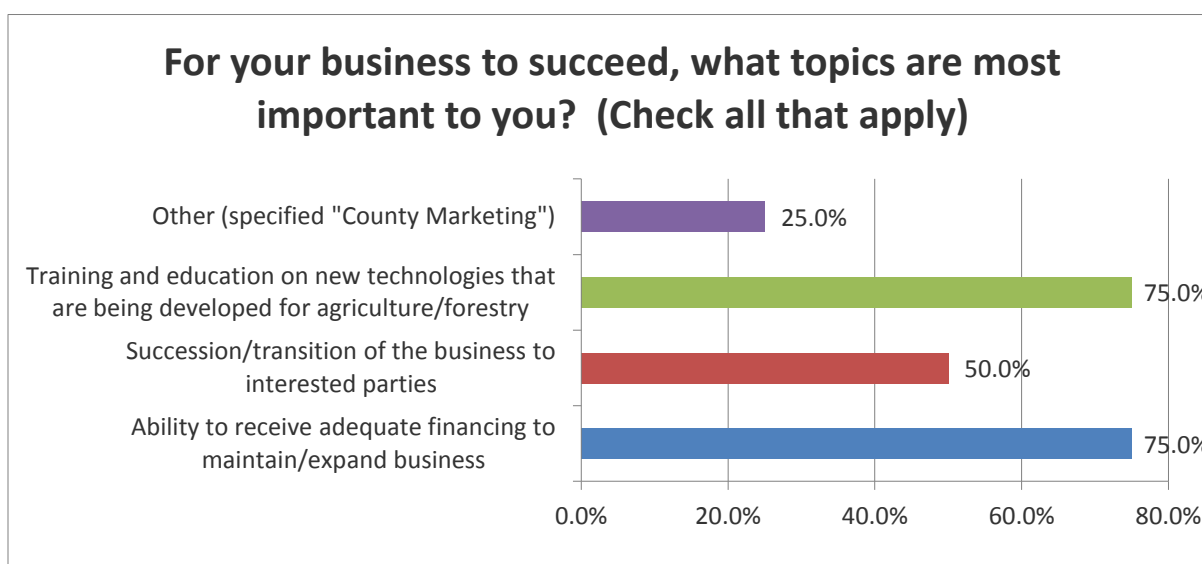


Figure 22. Source: MOC Agribusiness Survey 2011

Forestry consultants and other forest industries are agribusinesses. There are 54 buyers of timber and 81 registered consulting foresters that serve landowners in the county⁵⁰. The county has one chip mill operated by International Paper in Snow Hill. Saw and pine wood go to Roanoke Rapids and the western part of the state. According to interviews, this hurts the county and landowners since loggers have to haul so far. The forest products industry contributed \$3,582,810 to the economy in Greene County in 2008⁵¹.

Non-Farm Public

Agriculture is woven so tightly into the fabric of Greene County that the smell of poultry waste sprayed on fields “smells like money” as one non-farm resident put it in an interview. Part of the attraction of the county is its rural nature and agriculture. The majority of the population in Greene County is non-farm, so it is important to understand residents’ perceptions of agriculture and its future.

Non-farm residents who completed the survey were from communities around the county: Snow Hill, Rouse Chapel, Willow Green, Hookerton, Ormond, Fort Run, Rainbow, Maury and Jason. The majority of those surveyed had lived in the county for 20 or more years (Figure 23). Almost 40 percent of those who lived elsewhere before moving to Greene County were from outside the Southeastern United States.

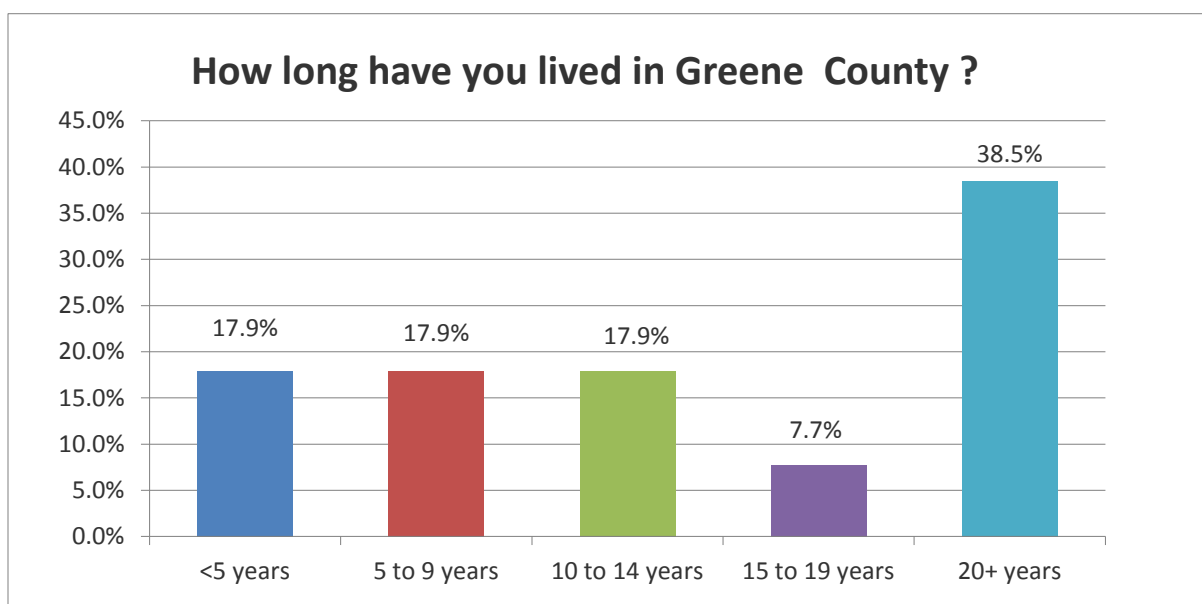


Figure 23. Source: MOC Non Farm Survey 2011

The majority of those surveyed had not been part of any agricultural operations. The rural nature of the county and population is reflected in the response that 64.1 percent of those surveyed lived near a farm or forest. These respondents felt that the producer/landowner was a good neighbor (Figure 24). Sixty-seven percent of non-farm respondents had visited a farm or forest within the last year.

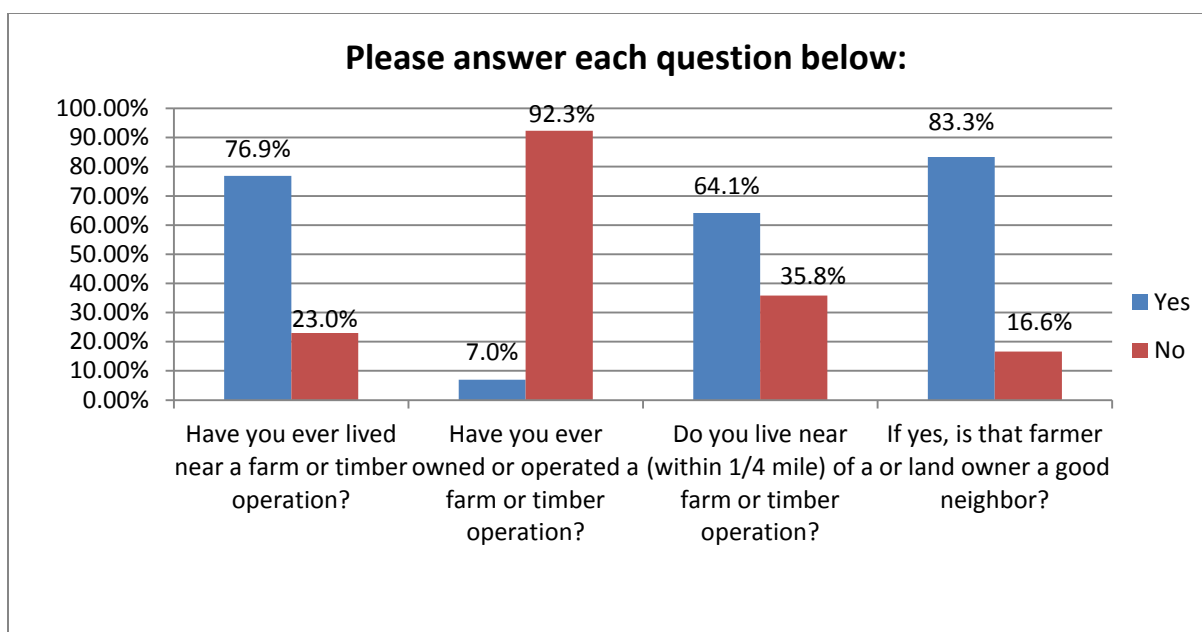


Figure 24. Source: MOC Non-Farm Survey 2011

With the close proximity of agriculture to these non-farm residents, issues do arise over agricultural practices. Over 46 percent reported no problems with their agricultural neighbors. However, for those that did have a problem, the top complaint was odor related (Figure 25). The majority (61.9 percent) did nothing about these complaints. Of those that did seek resolution, 42.9 percent still did not understand why that activity was necessary.

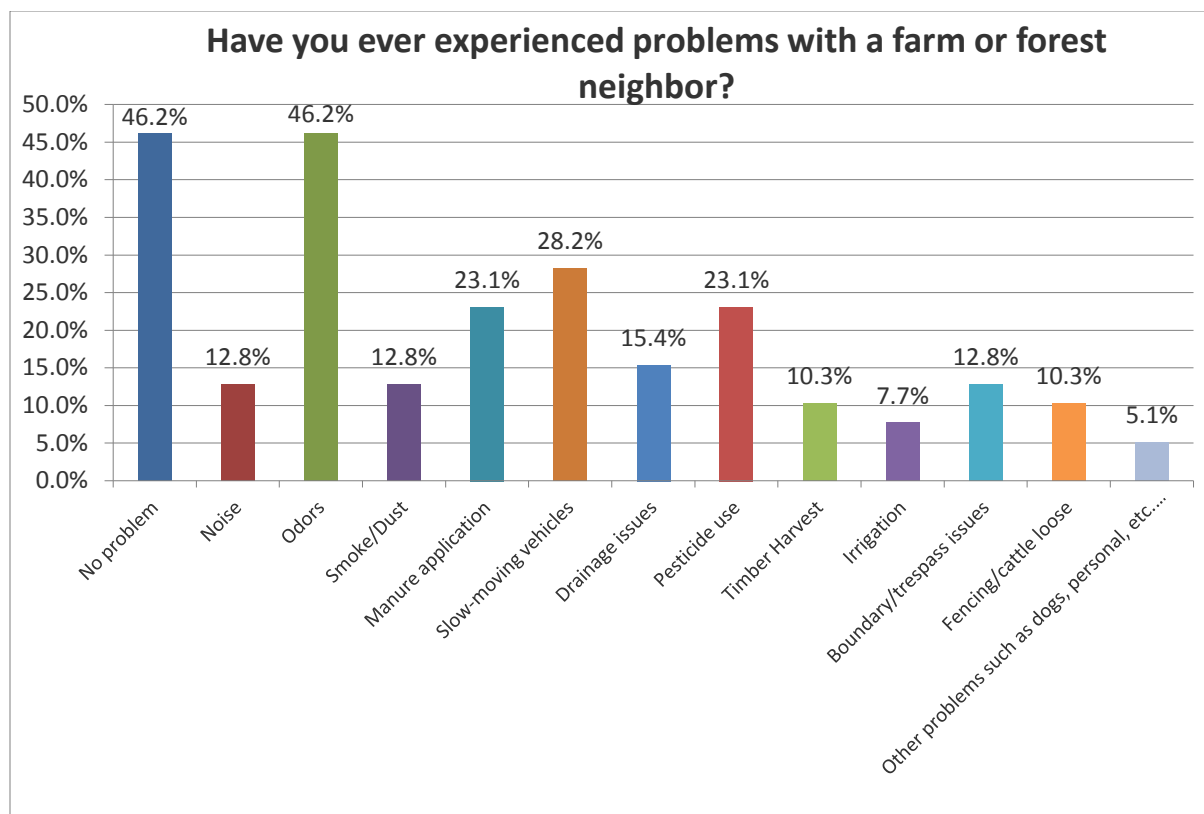


Figure 25. Source: MOC Non-Farm Survey 2011

This surveyed population also acknowledged the strength of agriculture within the county. Over the past five years, 63.2 percent were bullish on agriculture and its future (Figure 26). However, these non-farm citizens could not correctly estimate the dollar value of agriculture for the county---\$162,881,362 for total cash receipts in 2009⁵². Nearly 59 percent stated that Greene County's agriculture economic impact totaled less than \$10 million.

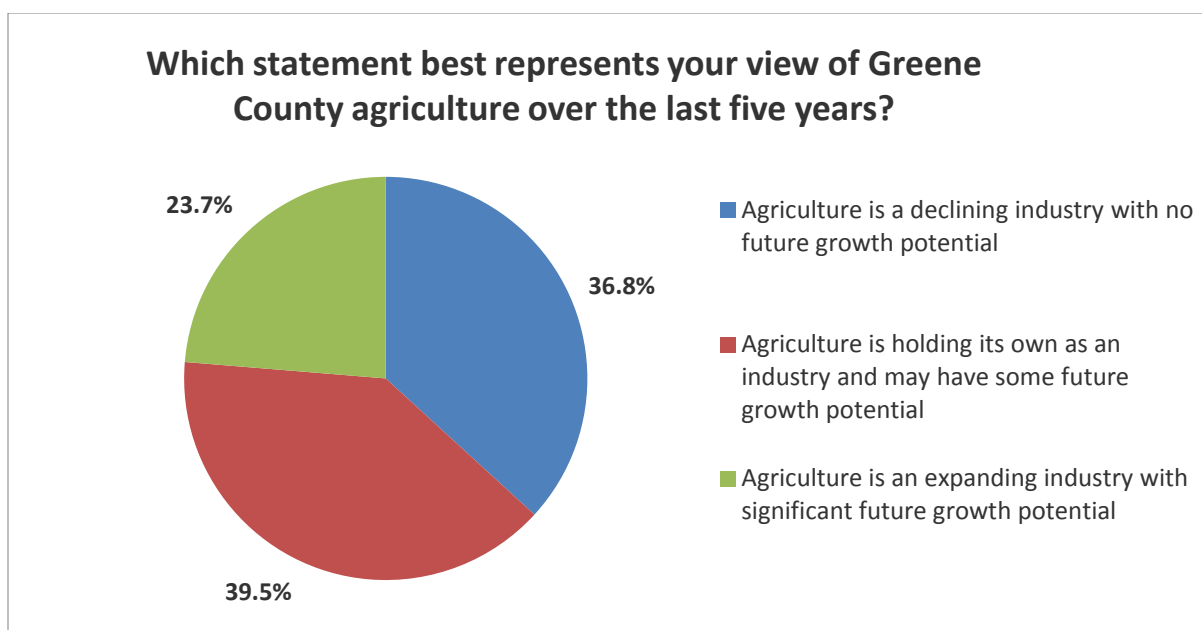


Figure 26. Source: MOC Non-Farm Survey 2011

Citizens who participated in the survey recognized the importance of supporting agriculture in the county. Ninety-two percent patronized farmers' markets, pick-your-own farms and local produce stands. The respondents had close relationships with local farmers as this was the primary way that they identified the products as local (Figure 27). More than 61 percent supported local nurseries and greenhouses with plant purchases, and 48.7 percent participated in agritourism activities such as corn mazes, pumpkin patches, and hay rides. Interviews with local residents also confirm this support of local agricultural products. The new farmers' market location along Highway 13 is viewed with great anticipation by both consumers and farmers.

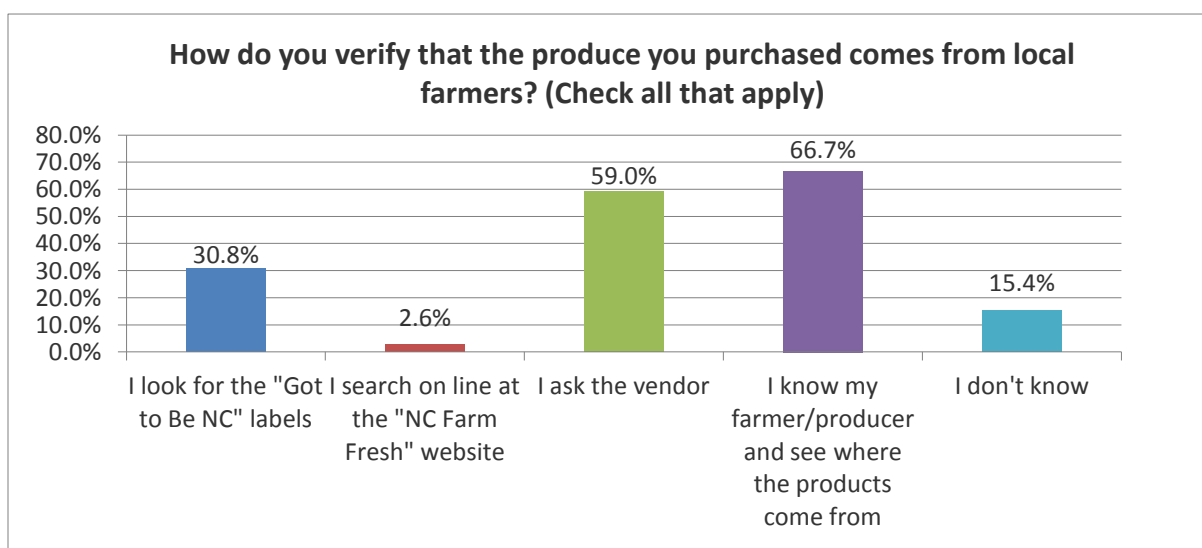


Figure 27. Source: MOC Non-Farm Survey 2011

The overall view of agriculture by the non-farm population in Greene County is favorable. The surveyed population felt that agriculture enhanced the scenic beauty and open space in the county (87.1 percent) and that local farmers delivered high-quality products (84.6 percent). More than 81 percent disagreed with the statement that farm and forest operations were pointless in Greene County. Almost 80 percent agreed that loans and grants are important to develop local farm enterprises, which emphasizes the widespread recognition that finance plays a huge part of agriculture's future. More than 89 percent of those surveyed felt that Greene County should take steps to preserve farms and forests (Figure 28). Eighty-one percent felt that agriculture and agribusinesses should be encouraged to expand in the county.

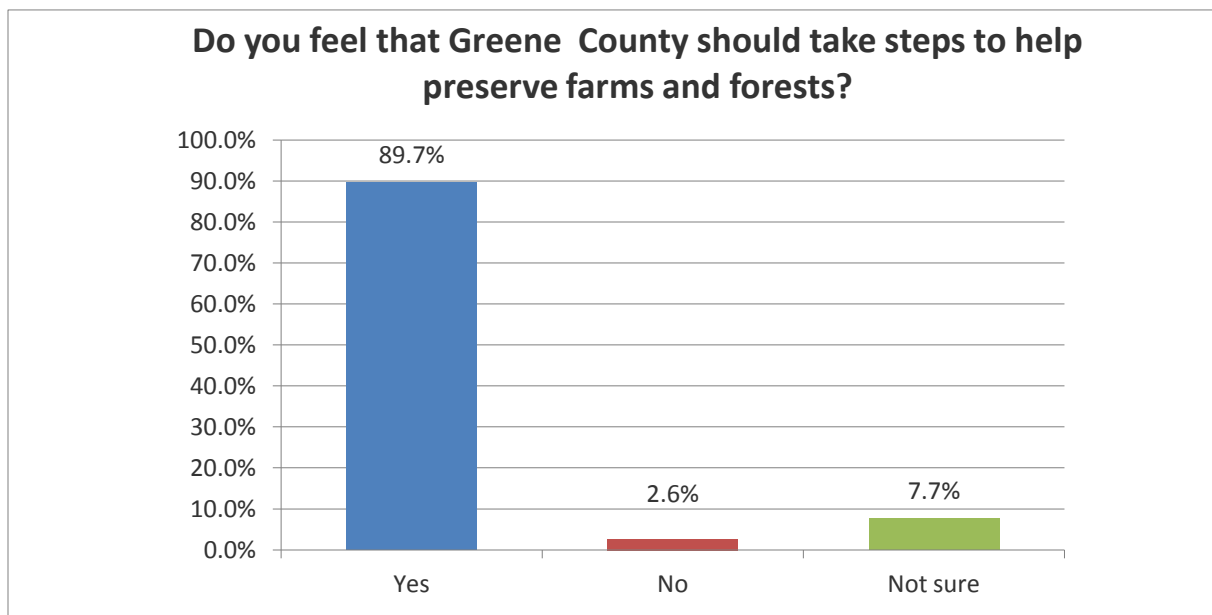


Figure 28. Source: MOC Non-Farm Survey 2011

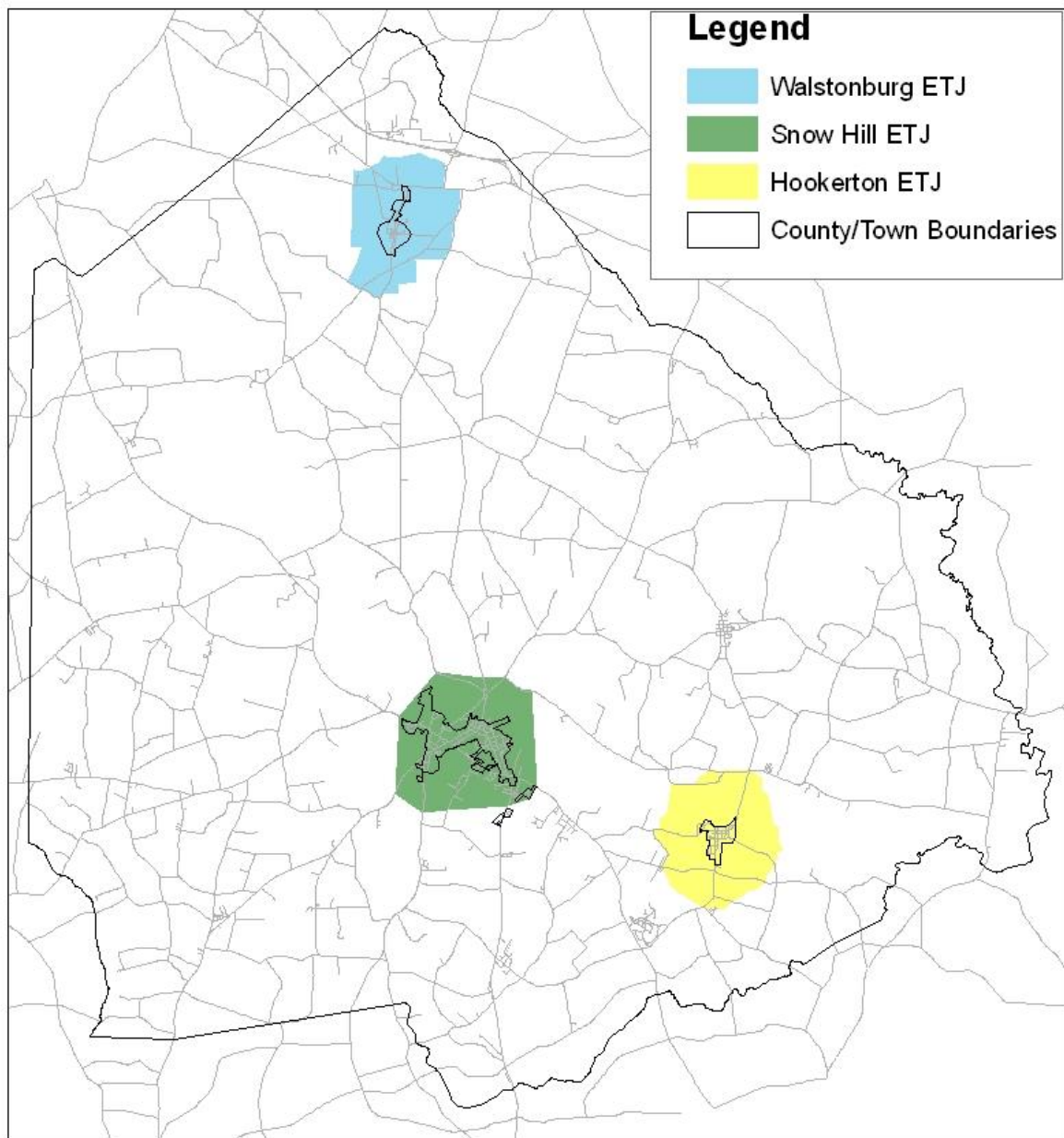
With the support of the non-farm population, agriculture can remain the solid economic engine it is. Through their support of local products, knowledge of agriculture and forestry as well as their participation in local government, agriculture can cope with the challenges that lie ahead.

Challenges and Opportunities for Agriculture and Forestry

Greene County has specific challenges and opportunities in agriculture and forestry. All of these need to be reviewed and examined to determine the best course of action to prepare for the future. But these challenges and opportunities are not static and will change over time. Periodic reviews and updates of this plan should be done to ensure that changes are noted and that the plan adapts to those changes.

The rural nature of the county is both a challenge and an opportunity. North Carolina has moved from a rural, agrarian society to a more urban one. As this shift has been made, the balance of power has shifted to the more populous regions of the state that may not advocate for agriculture and the development needs of rural parts of the state. As a challenge, the lack of population represents a lack of voice in the legislative process. This, in turn, can affect funding for rural development, agricultural programs, infrastructure, economic development and improved services such as broadband internet access and roads. A concerted effort must be made to ensure the general public and decision makers are aware of the unique situation that revolves around the rural areas of the state and the continued impact that these rural areas have on the overall state economy and well-being. At the same time, there is growing awareness of the importance of agriculture in the state, which ranges from the eco-system services it provides to the sense of place that agriculture creates. This could be a great opportunity for Greene County to profit from providing these benefits.

Even though Greene County has seen a growth in its population over the past 10 years, the county is defined as rural. The Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJs) of the existing towns are relatively small, therefore posing no real threat to farms and forests from ETJ regulations or zoning issues (Figure 29).



Greene County Town ETJs



Figure 29. Source: Greene County Tax Department-GIS

This rural nature offers benefit to the county. As the dust of the building boom has settled, the population in the state is slowly realizing the importance of agriculture in the ecosystem services it provides, the significance of locally grown and made products, and the quality of life that agriculture and forestry provide for the state. Greene County is poised to capitalize on this through its strong agriculture and forestry operations. Local non-farm residents surveyed for this plan stated that they think agriculture enhances the scenic beauty of the county.

Unemployment in Greene was 10.5 percent in March 2011, the same as the state average. Agriculture employment tends to be seasonal. As farmers seek ways to diversify their operations, new ventures and value-added production can be important parts of improving the employment situation in Greene.

One of the most immediate challenges to agriculture in Greene County is the average age of a producer, which is more than 20 years older than the average age of a resident of the county. What becomes of the farm with these older operators is the real puzzle for the county.

Many producers feel obligated to divide the land among the heirs. As the land becomes more parcelized, farm size can be reduced to the point that it can affect its PUV qualification. Other producers feel that it is not a decision they should make—it lies with their heirs to do what they want with the land. The heirs often do not live in the county and are not aware of how to manage the land effectively to maintain its viability. Many heirs then see the sale of the property as the only option in light of today's economy. Education and planning must be made available to the landowners, operators and heirs so that entire families can contribute to the decision of what to do with the farm or forest.

As producers age out of agriculture, beginning farmers have found it more difficult to go into agriculture because of the high costs of land, equipment, feed, fertilizers and buildings and a lack of adequate capital. Land availability has become increasingly limited. Producers surveyed said they could not expand because they did not own enough land to expand and because of the lack of land available to rent. As production costs continue to rise, the economics of scale force current farmers to shift to larger acreage in order to make a profit. This has an impact on beginning farmers as well as those who lack capital to buy even a small farm. In interviews, it was noted that the increase in livestock production also creates competition for available land due to the need for environmentally sound waste management practices.

The cost of operations has been consistently higher than income earned by more than 75 percent for the past 10 years according to the USDA Census of Agriculture. Regulations, which are a major part of operations costs, were often cited in the producer surveys and interviews as a deterrent for expansion in agriculture. When coupled with high start-up costs, many young people do not want to go into agriculture or forestry. While the idea of living on the farm or working the forest appeals to many people, the reality is stark. There are few incentives available for new or beginning farmers or forest landowners to pursue this career path.

There is also a need for readiness for natural disasters. Hurricane Floyd brought \$1.29 billion worth of damages to agriculture in a 66-county region, which included Greene⁵³. Most of the county was underwater and was declared a disaster area by FEMA⁵⁴. The drought of 1998-2002 still resonates with producers. Interviews conducted in the county show that water quality and water conservation are eminent issues that must be dealt with as the state's population expands and salt water intrusion is found further inland. Agriculture's readiness to address these issues is underway and needs to be continued. While any natural disaster will have significant impacts on agriculture, diversification in agriculture continues to be a method of risk management that helps farmers and landowners survive complete losses from natural disasters.

Despite all the challenges, there are opportunities for farm families to thrive. One method to tap into those opportunities is through local resources and education. Greene County is fortunate to have committed county agencies that can provide the resources and information for agriculture and forestry. In interviews, the importance and value of these local agencies was noted. However, continued collaboration is needed to provide landowners and farmers with the necessary tools and to optimally manage their farms and forests.

Through collaboration and education, information is available to landowners and producers to ensure viability. In the surveys conducted among county producers, 25 percent stated that they did not know if their lands were enrolled in the county PUV program. More than 66 percent did not have a forestry management plan for their timberland, and more than 66 percent did not have a farm transition plan in place. Additionally, only half of those who responded to the surveys were aware of the Voluntary Agricultural District program in Greene County. These responses show a great need for information to reach farmers and landowners in the county so that they can make educated decisions about their farms and forests.

The growing interest in local foods is also an opportunity for Greene County. In the surveys conducted in the county among producers, 88.9 percent said there was a need to develop additional outlets and support for local products. All said that they would participate if these new outlets were developed. Agritourism was also noted as an expansion/diversification effort in the county.

The county is moving ahead on this effort. The Sweet Potato Festival was established four years ago and is held in the fall to promote one of the big vegetable commodities as well as the county. It has continued to grow in interest and participation. The N.C. Tobacco Trust Fund Commission and the Golden Leaf Foundation awarded a grant to the county to establish a permanent structure for the county's farmers' market in Snow Hill. The opening of the new market has been viewed with great anticipation. Many hope local farmers will expand their operations to include local produce and products to sell at the market. The recent storm has stalled this effort but the county is committed to seeing this important market avenue for agricultural products open and serving the community. There are also other farmers' markets in the region that could be served by local producers.

Area restaurants provide additional opportunities to sell local produce and products. Several producers in the region currently sell to restaurants in Kinston, Greenville and New Bern. Chef education, information on production demands and trade show presentations were cited in interviews as necessary steps to reach this audience.

Producers surveyed stated that they would like assistance in business development. This type of training is important for farmers to plan and grow their operations, which can be tailored to meet new and niche markets through careful business planning.

There is also increased awareness of the various job opportunities in agriculture. Repeatedly, producers and agribusinesses surveyed said that agriculture should be taught in all levels of the education system. Job skills in agribusiness that provide services to agriculture could be taught at the local schools and community colleges as potential career paths. The FFA program at Greene County High School was often cited as an exemplary program that fostered interest in the agricultural field among students. Surveys from the general public showed that more than 80 percent think that agribusiness should be encouraged to expand in Greene County. With new technology and regulations, career opportunities could blossom in the county.

Greene County producers are well aware of the opportunities and what is needed to meet them. Producers who completed the surveys expressed interest in training for:

- Estate/farm-forest transition planning
- GAP certification
- Regional branding
- Sales and marketing of farm/forest products
- Agritourism opportunities
- Timber management, pine straw sales, timber management, selection of forestry consultants, and other timber related issues.
- Biofuel feedstock or woody biomass production
- How to apply for federal and state contracts for their products

To take advantage of these opportunities, careful planning needs to occur and strategies need to be developed.

Existing Farmland Preservation Tools

Working Land Protection Programs and Tools *(Compiled by John Bonham, 2009)*

There are programs and tools that can enhance farmland sustainability. Some of these programs are state programs. Other options are for the local leadership to consider.

Present-Use Value Tax Program

Present-Use Value, or PUV, is a program established by N.C.G.S. 105-277.2 to .7 and administered by the county assessor through which qualifying property can be assessed, for property tax purposes, based on its use as agricultural, horticultural or forest land. The present-use value is the value of the land based solely on its ability to produce income. Qualifying property is assessed at its present-use value rather than its market value. The tax office also maintains a market value for the land. The difference between market value and the present-use value is maintained in the tax records as deferred taxes. When land becomes disqualified from the program, the deferred taxes for the current and three previous years, with interest, will usually become payable and due.

Basic Requirements

Minimum acreage of production land:

- 10 acres for agricultural use
- 5 acres for horticulture use
- 20 acres for forest use
 - Production must follow a sound management plan.
 - Agricultural and horticultural land must have at least one qualifying tract that has produced an average gross income of at least \$1,000 for the three years preceeding the application year.
 - Forest land must follow a forest management plan.

Benefits

- Protection from:
 - Increasing land values that are based on development potential.
 - The potential increase in property taxes.

More information can be found at:

<http://www.dor.state.nc.us/publications/property.html>

Voluntary Agricultural Districts (VAD)

Established by N.C.G. S. 106-737 to 743 and administered at the county level, Voluntary Agricultural Districts are designated areas where commercial agriculture will be encouraged and protected. The purpose of the districts is to increase identity and pride in the agricultural community and to increase protection from nuisance suits and other negative impacts on properly managed farms. Greene County adopted the VAD in May 2007. The program is currently enrolling acreage. As of July 2011 there are 622 acres under review for inclusion in the Voluntary Agricultural District program. The VAD ordinance for Greene County is located in Appendix A.

Requirements

- Land must be enrolled in the Present-Use Value program or otherwise be determined to meet the qualifications of the program.
- The landowner must enter into a revocable agreement to limit development for a ten-year period.

Benefits

- Notification to buyers of nearby property that they're moving into an agricultural area.
- Abeyance of water and sewer assessments.
- Public hearings on the condemnation of farmland.
- Stronger protection from nuisance suits.
- Representation by an appointed board regarding concerns on threats to the agricultural sector.

Enhanced Voluntary Agricultural Districts

Established by N.C.G.S. 106-743.1 to .5, an Enhanced Voluntary Agricultural District is a VAD formed of one or more farms that are subject to an IRREVOCABLE 10-year agreement to limit development. In return for the condition of irrevocability, the landowner receives the added benefits of being able to receive 25 percent of gross revenue from the sale of non-farm products and still qualify as a bona fide farm, and being eligible to receive up to 90 percent cost-share assistance from the Agricultural Cost Share Program.

Conservation Easements

A conservation easement is a written agreement between a landowner and a qualified conservation organization or public agency under which the landowner agrees to keep the land available for agriculture and to restrict subdivision, non-farm development and other uses that are incompatible with commercial agriculture.

Basic Requirements

- Permanently foregoing the right to subdivide or develop the land being conserved. There will be other limitations on activities to preserve the land's productivity, environmental values, and rural character.
- Cash payments in the range of \$20,000 to \$40,000 are needed to cover the costs of the transaction. These costs are for legal services, a survey, an appraisal, long-term stewardship services provided by the conservation partner, and other miscellaneous activities. In some cases grant funds will cover these costs.

Other Information

- A portion of the property can be left out of the easement, thereby providing an area for future homes and other non-farm activities.
- Agricultural activities, including forestry, are allowed under the agreement.
- Despite the term "easement" access to the public is not provided by the agreement.
- The value of a conservation easement is determined by a licensed land appraiser and is typically between 25 percent and 75 percent of the land's market value.
- A periodic inspection of the property is required to ensure that development does not occur. This provision will be included in the agreement.
- The agreement is recorded on the county's land records and runs with the title. All future landowners must comply with the terms and conditions of the agreement.

Financial Benefits

- If the conservation easement is donated then the landowner will likely qualify for a federal income tax deduction and a state income tax credit. The value of these benefits depends on the appraised value of the easement and the income tax situation of the landowner.
- A conservation easement can also be sold by the landowner through a transaction commonly referred to as a Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) or Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easement (PACE). Funds to purchase a conservation easement can be raised from private and government sources. North Carolina and the federal government have programs to purchase agricultural conservation easements. Funding through these programs is very competitive and will generally amount to a percentage of the easement's value. The tax benefits described above can be claimed for any of the easement's value above the purchase price.

Term Conservation Easements

Also called Agricultural Agreements, these agreements are similar to conservation easements but apply for a finite period of time agreed to by the landowner and conservation partner.

Farm Transition Planning

Making careful plans for the transfer of ownership of farm property and assets from the current owner to the next can be enough to preserve a farm for decades. Many options are available when planning an estate or land transfer. Farm owners can increase the likelihood of a successful transition that maintains the viability of the farm by obtaining professional assistance early in the process. Numerous colleges and universities provide educational resources to professionals and landowners on this matter.

Right –to-Farm Law

North Carolina has a right-to-farm law (N.C.G.S. 106-700 to 701 (2006) that protects farm and forestry operations from being declared a nuisance as long as they have been in operation for at least one year and are operated properly and without negligence.

N.C. Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund

N.C.G.S. 106-744(c) established a trust fund to be administered by the Commissioner of Agriculture. The purpose of the trust fund is to provide monies to purchase agricultural conservation easements and to fund programs that promote the development and sustainability of farming, and the transition of existing farms to new farm families. Counties and nonprofit conservation organizations can apply for grants for these purposes. The General Assembly has appropriated money every year since 2005.

Recommendations and Timelines

The recommendations that follow are just that—recommendations. These do not infringe on any landowner's right to do what he or she wishes to do with the land. The recommendations provide a framework for county agencies that work with agriculture to assist producers and landowners. In order for the recommendations to be effective and relevant, they must be reviewed periodically—at least annually—to ensure the latest information is presented to the populations targeted.

Maintain Agriculture's Economic Viability in Greene County.

For farms and forests to remain in production, they must remain profitable. With increasing production costs and tighter margins for profit, farming and forestry face great obstacles. Actions must be taken to maintain what currently exists in Greene County.

1. Promote and expand the Voluntary Agricultural District Program and the Agricultural Advisory Board.

The Voluntary Agricultural District ordinance was passed in May 2007 and is found in Appendix A. VAD program leadership has shifted multiple times since the passing of the ordinance and no farms have been formally enrolled to date, but a number of farms have submitted applications for consideration. The VAD is an effective tool for farms and forests to build recognition of the presence of agriculture in the county and provide some measure of protection to landowners against nuisance lawsuits. Participation in the VAD will also allow landowners to defer water and sewer assessments.

The Greene County Board of Commissioners has appointed an Agricultural Advisory Board, and officers have been elected. The board will serve as the liaison between agriculture and the county, providing leadership and guidance to further agriculture's interests. Board members have been apprised of their responsibilities, and their selection to the board is based upon their knowledge and commitment to agriculture and Greene County. With the appointment of the board, it is expected that the VAD program is poised to expand.

Responsible Agencies: N.C. Cooperative Extension Greene County Center, Greene County Soil and Water Conservation District, N.C. Forest Service Greene County, Greene County Tax Department, Greene County Planning Department and other related agencies.

Timeline: The Agricultural Advisory Board should continue review of applications as soon as possible. Promotion of the VAD program should continue and information/workshops should be scheduled to coincide with upcoming festivals, meetings and training programs planned for the Fourth Quarter of 2011 and First Quarter of 2012. This recommendation is to be reviewed yearly or as often as the Agricultural Advisory Board deems necessary.

2. Explore the establishment of an Enhanced Voluntary Agricultural District program in Greene County.

As the VAD program grows, the Agricultural Advisory Board should explore the establishment of an Enhanced Voluntary Agricultural District (EVAD) program in the county. Farmers surveyed for this plan were unaware of the EVAD program, which offers additional options for landowners who wish to keep their land in agricultural production. The potential to gain more income from the sale of non-farm products and still qualify as a bona fide farm as well as the eligibility to receive up to 90 percent cost-share assistance from the Agricultural Cost Share Program could be another avenue for landowners to consider. This option should be made available to landowners to help expand the opportunities to keep the farm in operation.

Responsible Agencies: N.C. Cooperative Extension Greene County Center, Greene County Soil and Water Conservation District, N.C. Forest Service Greene County, Greene County Tax Department, Greene County Planning Department and other related agencies.

Timeline: The Agricultural Advisory Board should start exploration of the EVAD program in 2013. Information/workshops on this program should be scheduled for the Agricultural Advisory Board for the Fourth Quarter of 2013. As information and formation of the EVAD become more solid, workshops should be conducted for landowners by 2014.

3. Conduct estate and farm transition planning training programs.

As the age of farmers and landowners increase, the future of their farms and forests is uncertain. Many heirs do not live in the county and are removed from the family farm. Agribusinesses surveyed for this report think that farm transition is one of the top issues for farmers in the county. Numerous farmers who were surveyed stated that they do not have a farm transition plan in place and many of those interviewed felt that wills would cover that issue. With estate laws constantly changing, this is not the case. It is imperative that farmers and producers become engaged and educated in estate and transition planning, which will ultimately affect their farm operations and land holdings. Heirs also need to be aware of the complexities of farm and forest operations in order to make informed decisions about future land uses. There is a wealth of information available, but it needs to be consolidated for producers and their families to gain an understanding of and begin developing transition plans.

Responsible Parties: Agricultural Advisory Board, N.C. Cooperative Extension Greene County Center, Greene County Soil and Water Conservation District, N.C. Forest Service Greene County, Greene County Tax Department, Greene County Farm Bureau, other agencies, colleges and universities.

Timeline: By June 2013, the Agricultural Advisory Board should begin planning an outreach effort for farm transition and estate planning. A specific workshop, educational program or other method of delivery should be implemented by Fourth Quarter 2013 to First Quarter 2014. This recommendation should be ongoing and reviewed at least annually for updates.

4. Establish a county forestry association.

With the evidence that many farmers have timberland, the development of a forestry association would be beneficial for educational opportunities and to build relationships among landowners, consulting foresters, the N.C. Forest Service and other groups involved in forestry. An increase in knowledge and resources would help landowners and producers manage their properties better, help families gain additional income from properly managed and harvested timber, and increase the influence of forestry in local policies.

Responsible Parties: Agricultural Advisory Board, N.C. Forest Service Greene County, N.C. Cooperative Extension Greene County Center, Greene County Tax Department, Greene County Farm Bureau.

Timeline: By Fourth Quarter 2012, the Agricultural Advisory Board and the other agencies listed should establish a committee to discuss the formation of a Greene County Forestry Association. This committee should address issues including but not limited to:

- Association Structure
- Association Mission
- Landowner Outreach
- Association Membership
- Topics/Educational Needs

Landowners with forestry interests would be identified through the Tax Department by Fourth Quarter 2012. The first association meeting should occur by First Quarter 2013 and should be held regularly as determined by the leadership.

5. Conduct educational opportunities utilizing available resources and information for producers, landowners and the general public.

County agencies that work with agriculture and forestry noted a need for stronger collaboration to provide farm families educational programs and resources to encourage farm and forest viability. Farmers and landowners identified the following educational and training needs:

- Soil and Water Conservation District's CREP, WHIP and EQUIP programs
- N.C. Forest Service's cost share programs for replanting trees
- GAP certification for farmers
- Land leases/rental agreements
- Development of biofuels from feedstocks and woody biomass
- Water conservation.

None of the surveyed producers leased their lands for hunting, fishing or cell tower use. This is an opportunity that family farms could capitalize upon for additional income. Many landowners will need additional information to ensure that they protect their land assets when entering a lease agreement.

Although Greene County's foundation is agriculture, there continues to be a need to promote agriculture and forestry as career options for youth and non-farm residents. This will help build an understanding of farm and forest activities as well as the important roles these industries play in Greene County and its economy.

As government budgets and policies fluctuate, periodic updates are needed. All the agencies involved with the Farm and Forest Protection Plan for Greene County have information and programs available to these audiences that are updated regularly.

Responsible Parties: Agricultural Advisory Board, N.C. Cooperative Extension Greene County Center, Greene County Soil and Water Conservation District, N.C. Forest Service Greene County, N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Greene County Farm Bureau and other related agencies.

Timeline: By first quarter 2013, all agencies should review programs and resources available to develop and determine the best way to disseminate this information. This can be through workshops on specific offerings or through existing events such as commodity meetings. Classroom activities such as Farm Bureau's "Ag in the Classroom" should be encouraged in the schools. FFA, 4-H and other youth leadership opportunities should receive continued support from the community. Various careers tied to agriculture and forestry should be presented to students. Because of the changing nature of agriculture and of government funding, this needs to be reviewed yearly and modified as needed to continue to meet the needs of the county.

6. Investigate the opportunity for and support funding of a Cost of Services Study for Greene County.

Farms and forests demand less from county services than do residential developments. Yet the perception remains that residential development presents the best source of additional revenue for the county. While costs of services studies have been conducted in other parts of the state, a focused study on Eastern North Carolina needs to be completed. Greene County would be an ideal county to participate in such a study, which would confirm agriculture's contributions to the county.

Responsible Parties: Agricultural Advisory Board, N.C. Cooperative Extension Greene County Center, Greene County Soil and Water Conservation District, N.C. Forest Service Greene County, N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Greene County Farm Bureau, area colleges and universities, and other related agencies.

Timeline: By Second Quarter 2013, contact should be initiated with researchers who would conduct the study. Agencies and groups that would participate in the study would assist as needed, providing details, data and access to complete the study. The study should be compiled and formatted for presentation to the Greene County Board of Commissioners by Third Quarter 2014. This study should be made available to the general public after presentation to the Board.

Marketing and Business Assistance

As agriculture changes, farmers must adapt by adjusting business plans to include diversification of commodities or markets. Value-added agriculture is made up of products derived from commodities produced on farm and can range from produce sold at farmers' markets to value-added products such as jams and jellies manufactured on the farm. As these new avenues are pursued, there may be a need for marketing and business assistance. The local food movement has gained momentum in Eastern North Carolina and Greene County, and producers are interested in taking advantage of this movement but need assistance to do so.

1. Conduct business development training.

As producers diversify and expand their operations, business training is essential. The development of new enterprises takes considerable effort, and many producers have difficulty finding funding sources, identifying new markets, securing reliable labor and other issues related to with new business development or expansion. Greene County producers identified business development training as a need that county agencies may be able to address.

Responsible Agencies: N.C. Cooperative Extension Greene County Center, N.C. Department of Agriculture's Marketing Department, N.C. State University's N.C. Market Ready, Greene County Economic Development, Lenoir County Community College Greene County, Agricultural Advisory Board and other related agencies.

Timeline: By First Quarter 2013, the agencies will have met to develop a needs assessment for training priorities and to determine what resources are currently available to meet those needs. By Second Quarter 2013, training for relevant topics will be made available to Greene County producers. Economic development resources will be identified and made available to farmers and landowners who wish to diversify by Second Quarter 2013.

2. Develop and implement a "Buy Local" promotion that describes steps necessary to develop relationships with local markets, restaurants and grocery stores. Develop agritourism opportunities in Greene County.

The local foods movement has been growing in North Carolina over the last five years. One program developed at N.C. State University encourages consumers to buy at least 10 percent of their food from local sources. There are several producers who currently serve area restaurants and attend farmers' markets in other counties. Greene County has put great effort into getting a

venue for its local farmers' market in Snow Hill to meet the growing interest in local foods. Survey results show that there is a strong interest in agritourism development for the county.

Survey results show a need to develop a "buy local" campaign, including a regional branding effort, to support local producers. Implementing the campaign will require skills to develop relationships with market managers, grocery stores and chefs at restaurants to encourage each to purchase local produce. Continuing to offer GAP certification to farmers is crucial for those who wish to work with larger entities that feature local foods and products.

Skills and additional education is also needed to help farmers and landowners explore agritourism options for their operations. Over 57 percent of the producers surveyed stated they would like to explore agritourism opportunities for their farm or forest. Specific rules, regulations and other requirements for agritourism operations need to be addressed for those producers who wish to move into this market share.

Numerous county agencies involved with the Farm and Forest Preservation Plan have resources to initiate this campaign.

Responsible parties: Agricultural Advisory Board, N.C. Cooperative Extension Green County Center, N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, N.C. Division of Tourism, Greene County Economic Development, area colleges and universities, and other appropriate parties.

Timeline: By Fourth Quarter 2012, agencies will conduct a series of workshops/trainings to extend through First Quarter 2013 for producers interested in the following areas and other topics deemed appropriate:

- Expanding into local food venues
- GAP certification
- Marketing at farmers' markets
- Marketing to restaurants
- Marketing to grocery stores
- Developing an agritourism market
- Developing a regional branding campaign

In addition, the development of a countywide marketing campaign, "**Buy Greene,**" kick off should coincide with the Sweet Potato Festival in the fall of 2013.

Initiate and Develop Farmland Preservation Efforts and Encourage Young Farmer-Agribusiness Development

1. Endorse the Farm and Forest Preservation Plan.

For this plan to be effective, it must be endorsed by the Greene County Board of Commissioners. Once the plan is endorsed, it is sent to the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services for certification. When the plan has been reviewed by NCDA&CS's legal counsel and it meets all statutory requirements, the plan will be certified. This certification will allow Greene County to be placed in priority status for funding for farmland preservation projects from the NCDA&CS ADFP Trust Fund. The county's Tier I status and military presence will also enhance its status for funds.

Responsible Parties: N.C. Cooperative Extension Greene County Center, Greene County Soil and Water Conservation District, Greene County Planning and Economic Development, Greene County Manager's Office, Agricultural Advisory Board and other interested parties.

Timeline: This plan should be presented to the Board of Commissioners during the Fourth Quarter 2011 and approved. Once endorsed, the plan will be submitted to NCDA&CS for certification. Once certification has been awarded, the county should seek opportunities for funding of farmland preservation projects.

2. Encourage Landowner Enrollment in Greene County's Present Use Value Program

Twenty-five percent of the producers surveyed were not sure that their farms or forest were enrolled in the county's PUV program. As the farming population ages, the heirs are often absent from the county and are not always aware of the county's Present Use Value program, which can keep land profitable by deferring taxes. Outreach is a necessity to ensure landowners are aware of this program.

Responsible Parties: Agricultural Advisory Board, Greene County Tax Department, N.C. Cooperative Extension Greene County Center, N.C. Forest Service Greene County, and other interested parties.

Timeline: Initial outreach should be conducted by Third Quarter 2012. This effort should be conducted on an annual basis and in concert with the property tax filing timetables.

3. Develop and deliver educational outreach opportunities to landowners and producers that address conservation easements, agricultural agreement, and other farmland protection programs and resources.

Landowners and producers expressed a need for information on the farmland protection programs and policies that are available to landowners. Different agencies have programs and resources that assist family farms or provide tax incentives to enroll in easements which can

help protect farmland. In surveys, producers were not aware of all available programs for farmland protection such as Enhanced VAD and conservation easements and agreements.

Responsible Parties: Agricultural Advisory Board, N.C. Cooperative Extension Greene County Center, Greene County Soil and Water Conservation District, N.C. Forest Service Greene County, various land conservancy entities and other interested parties.

Timeline: This effort should be a component of other outreach efforts that target landowners, producers and heirs. Efforts to address the format for this outreach effort should be determined by Third Quarter 2012 with educational delivery methods established and initiated by Fourth Quarter 2012.

4. Develop educational programs and create career opportunities for young people in agriculture, forestry and agribusiness.

Producers and agribusinesses who were surveyed felt that career opportunities in agriculture should be promoted. Interviews confirmed that many in the county see the value of encouraging careers in agriculture. Career paths in agriculture go beyond farming – welding, soil science, biotechnology, precision agriculture, environmental sciences, research and development all are viable careers to be explored. Surveys revealed that all target audiences felt that agriculture should be an integral component within the public school system at all levels.

Responsible Parties: Agricultural Advisory Board, N.C. Cooperative Extension, Greene County Center, Greene County Soil and Water Conservation District, Greene County School System, Green Central FFA, Greene County Farm Bureau, area colleges and universities, and other interested parties.

Timeline: By First Quarter 2013, programs should be identified that promote careers in agriculture and forestry. Programs for consideration would include:

- Ag in the Classroom
- Agricultural Academies
- Junior Forestry Associations
- Agricultural Leadership Workshops and Programs
- Young Farmer Mentoring Programs

Determination of outreach efforts and information about these efforts should begin by Fourth Quarter 2013 and be continuous to reach all students at all stages of their academic career.

Recommendations	Responsible Agencies	Timeline			
		2011	2012	2013	2014
Maintain Agriculture's Economic Viability in Greene County					
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Promote and expand the Voluntary Agricultural District Program and the Agricultural Advisory Board.	N.C. Extension Greene County, Greene SWCD, NCFS Greene County, Greene Tax Dept., Greene Planning Dept. and other related agencies	Fourth Quarter	First Quarter		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Explore the establishment of an Enhanced Voluntary Agricultural District program in Greene County.	N.C. Extension Greene County, Greene SWCD, NCFS Greene County, Greene Tax Dept., Greene Planning Dept. and other related agencies			Fourth Quarter	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Conduct estate and farm transition planning trainings.	Agricultural Advisory Board, N.C. Extension Greene County, Greene SWCD, NCFS Greene County, Greene Tax Dept., Greene Planning Dept., Greene County Farm Bureau and other related agencies			Fourth Quarter	First Quarter
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Establish a county forestry association.	Agricultural Advisory Board, NCFS Greene County, N.C. Extension Greene County, Greene Tax Dept., Greene County Farm Bureau		Fourth Quarter	First Quarter	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Conduct educational opportunities utilizing available resources and information for producers, landowners, and the general public.	Agricultural Advisory Board, N.C. Extension Greene County, Greene SWCD, NCFS Greene County, NCDA, Greene County Farm Bureau and other related agencies			First Quarter	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Investigate the opportunity and support funding of Cost of Services Study for Greene County.	Agricultural Advisory Board, N.C. Extension Greene County, Greene SWCD, NCFS Greene County, NCDA, Greene County Farm Bureau, area colleges and universities, and other related agencies			Second Quarter	Third Quarter

		2011	2012	2013	2014
Marketing and Business Assistance					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct business development training 	N.C. Cooperative Extension Greene County, NCDA's Marketing Dept, NCSU's N.C .Market Ready, Greene County Economic Development, Lenoir County Community College, Agricultural Advisory Board and other related agencies		First Quarter	Second Quarter	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement a "Buy Local" promotion that describes steps necessary to develop relationships with local markets, restaurants and groceries and also develop agritourism opportunities in Greene County 	Agricultural Advisory Board, N.C. Cooperative Extension Greene County, NCDA, N.C. Division of Tourism, Greene County Economic Development, area colleges and universities and other appropriate parties		Fourth Quarter	First Quarter	
Initiate and Develop Farmland Preservation Efforts and Encourage Young Farmer-Agribusiness Development					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Endorsement of the Farm and Forest Preservation Plan 	N.C. Cooperative Extension Greene County, Greene SWCD, Greene County Planning and Economic Development, Greene County Manager's office, Agricultural Advisory Board and other interested parties		Fourth Quarter		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage Landowner Enrollment in Greene County's Present Use Value Program 	Agricultural Advisory Board, Greene County Tax Department, N.C. Cooperative Extension Greene County, NCFS Greene County and other interested parties		Third Quarter		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and deliver educational outreach opportunities to landowners and producers that address conservation easements, agricultural agreements, and other farmland protection programs and resources. 	Agricultural Advisory Board, N.C. Cooperative Extension Greene County, Greene SWCD, NCFS Greene County, various land conservancy entities and other interested parties		Third Quarter Fourth Quarter		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop educational programs and create career opportunities for young people in agriculture, forestry, and agribusiness. 	Agricultural Advisory Board, N.C. Cooperative Extension Greene County, Greene SWCD, Greene School System, Greene Central FFA, Greene Farm Bureau, area colleges and universities, and other interested parties	First Quarter Fourth Quarter
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Appendix A

Greene County Voluntary Agricultural District Ordinance

GREENE COUNTY

VOLUNTARY AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT ORDINANCE

ARTICLE I

TITLE

An ordinance of the Board of County Commissioners of GREENE COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA, entitled, “**VOLUNTARY AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT ORDINANCE.**”

ARTICLE II

AUTHORITY

The articles and sections of this ordinance are adopted pursuant to authority conferred by the N.C.G.S. 106-735 through 106-744 and Chapter 153A of the North Carolina General Statutes.

ARTICLE III

PURPOSE

The purpose of this ordinance is to promote agricultural values and the general welfare of the county and more specifically, increase identity and pride in the agricultural community and its way of life, encourage the economic and financial health of agriculture and forestry; and increase protection from non-farm development and other negative impacts on properly managed farms.

ARTICLE IV

DEFINITIONS

The following are defined for purposes of this ordinance:

<u>Advisory Board:</u>	Greene County Agricultural Advisory Board.
<u>Chairperson:</u>	Chairperson of the Greene County Agricultural Advisory Board.
<u>District:</u>	Voluntary Agricultural District as established under the terms and conditions of this program by the Board of Commissioners.
<u>Board of Commissioners:</u>	Greene County Board of Commissioners.

ARTICLE V

AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD

A. Creation:

The Board of Commissioners, in accordance with NCGS 106-739, hereby establishes an Agricultural Advisory Board to implement the provisions of this program.

B. Membership:

The Advisory Board shall consist of no less than nine (9) voting members appointed by the Board of Commissioners. One each shall be selected to represent each of the nine townships.

C. Membership Requirements:

1. Each Advisory Board member shall be a Greene County resident or landowner.
2. At least 5 of the members shall be actively engaged in farming.
3. The Board of Commissioners shall select the members actively engaged in farming, as well as other members, for appointment to the Advisory Board. The Board of Commissioners may consider names submitted by the Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors, the County Office of North Carolina Cooperative Extension, the U.S. Farm Service Agency County Committee, nonprofit agricultural organizations, conservation organizations, agribusiness, and the public at large.

D. Tenure:

The initial board is to consist of three (3) appointees for terms of one year; three (3) appointees for terms of two years; and three (3) appointees for terms of three years. Thereafter all appointments are to be for terms of three years, with reappointment up to three (3) consecutive terms permitted. Reappointment to additional terms is permitted after a full year off the board.

E. Vacancies:

Any vacancy on the Advisory Board is to be filled by the Board of Commissioners for the remainder of the unexpired term.

F. Removal:

The Board of Commissioners may remove any member of the Advisory Board.

G. Funding:

The Board of Commissioners may appropriate funds for the Agricultural Advisory Board to perform its duties. A budget request will be presented to the Board of Commissioners.

H. Advisory Board Procedure:

1. Officers:

The Advisory Board shall elect a chairperson and vice-chairperson each year at its first meeting of the fiscal year. The chairperson shall preside over all regular or special meetings of the Advisory Board. In the absence or disability of the chairperson, the vice-chairperson shall preside and shall exercise all the powers of the chairperson. Additional officers may be elected as needed.

2. Jurisdiction:

The Advisory Board may adopt rules of procedure not inconsistent with this ordinance or with other provisions of State law.

3. Advisory Board Year

The Advisory Board shall use the Greene County fiscal year as its meeting year.

4. Meetings:

Meetings of the Advisory Board shall be held at the call of the chairperson and at such other times as the Advisory Board may specify in its rules of procedure or upon the request of at least a majority of the Advisory Board Membership. A meeting shall be held at least quarterly.

5. Majority Vote:

All issues shall be decided by a majority vote of the members of the Advisory Board, except as otherwise stated herein.

6. Records:

The Advisory Board shall keep minutes of the proceedings showing the vote of each member upon each question, or if absent or failing to vote, indicating such fact, and shall keep records of its examinations and other official actions, all of which shall be filed in the office of the Advisory Board and shall be a public record.

7. Administration:

The Advisory Board may contract for record keeping, correspondence, application procedures under this ordinance, and whatever services the Board needs to complete its duties.

I. Duties:

The Advisory Board shall:

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1. Review and approve applications for qualified farmland and voluntary agricultural districts and make recommendations concerning the establishment and modification of agricultural districts;
 2. Advise the Board of Commissioners on projects, programs, or issues affecting the agricultural economy or activities within the county that will affect agricultural districts;
 3. Review and make recommendations concerning proposed amendments to this ordinance provided however that the Board of Commissioners may revise and/or amend this ordinance without the Advisory Board review or advice.

The Advisory Board may:

1. Develop a draft countywide farmland protection plan as defined in N.C.G.S. 106-744(e)(1) for presentation to the Board of Commissioners.
2. Study additional methods of farmland preservation and make recommendations to the Board of Commissioners; and
3. Perform other agricultural related tasks or duties assigned by the Board of Commissioners including but not limited to conducting public hearings.

ARTICLE VI

CREATION OF VOLUNTARY AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS

A. Regions:

Greene County is hereby divided into 9 regions which are the townships:

B. Implementation:

In order to implement the purposes stated in Article III, this program provides for the creation of voluntary agricultural districts, which meet the following standards:

1. The District when initially established shall contain a minimum of 20 contiguous acres of qualified farmland; or shall contain 3 or more qualified tracts of land within one-half mile of each other which contain a total of at least 20 acres.
2. The County Tax Office identifies the tract(s) of land as agriculture.
All land enrolled in a region, defined in Section A, above, shall be part of a single district. If a single farm has acreage in two or more regions, the farm shall participate in the district where the largest acreage is found.

C. Education:

The county may take such action as it deems appropriate through the Advisory Board or other entities or individuals to encourage the formation of the Districts and to further their purposes and objectives, including the implementation of a public information to reasonably inform landowners of the agricultural district program.

D. Addition and Withdrawal:

1. Qualifying farmland in a region with an existing district shall be added to the district as herein provided.
2. In the event that one or more participants in the district withdraw and results in the remaining land being noncontiguous, a voluntary agricultural district will continue to exist so long as there is at a minimum twenty remaining acres.

ARTICLE VII

CERTIFICATION AND QUALIFICATION OF FARMLAND

Requirements

To secure county certification as qualifying farmland, a farm must meet the following criteria:

1. Be participating in the farm present-use-value taxation program established by N.C.G.S. 105-277.2 through 105-277.7, or is otherwise determined by the county to meet all the qualifications of this program set for in G.S. 105-277.3; and
2. Be certified by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (formerly the Soil Conservation Service) of the United States Department of Agriculture as being a farm on which at least two-thirds of the land is composed of soils that:
 - a. Are best suited for providing food, seed, fiber, forage, timber, forestry products, horticultural crops and oil seed crops; and
 - b. Have good soil qualities; and
 - c. Are favorable for all major crops common to the county where the land is located; and
 - d. Receive the available moisture needed to produce high yields for an average of eight out of ten years; and
 - e. Have been actively used in agricultural, horticultural or forestry operations as defined by N.C.G.S. 105-277.2 (1,2,3) during each of the five previous years, measured from the date on which the determination must be made as to whether the land in question qualifies; and
3. Be managed, if highly erodible land exists on the farm, in accordance with the Natural Resources Conservation Service defined erosion-control practices that are addressed to said highly-erodible land; and
4. Be the subject of a conservation agreement, as defined in N.C.G.S. 121.35, between the county and the owner of such land the prohibits non-farm use or development of such land for a period of at least ten years, except for the creation of not more than three lots that meet applicable county regulations.

ARTICLE VIII

APPLICATION, APPROVAL, AND APPEAL PROCEDURE

A. Application Procedure:

1. A landowner may apply to participate in the program by making application to the chairperson of the Advisory Board or a designated staff person. The application shall be on forms provided by the Advisory Board. The application to participate in a district may be filed with the certification for qualifying farmland
2. A conservation agreement to sustain, encourage, and promote agriculture must be executed by the landowner and recorded with the Greene County Register of Deeds.

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3. The Board of County Commissioners will set the fee for participation in Voluntary Agriculture Districts.
 4. Fees for participation must accompany the application
- B. Approval Process:
1. Upon submission of the application to the Advisory Board, the Advisory Board shall meet within sixty (60) days, but not before the end of the comment period set out below, to approve or disapprove the application. The chairperson shall notify the applicant by first class mail of approval or disapproval of participation in the district.
 2. Upon receipt of an application, the chairperson will forward copies immediately to the following offices which shall be asked to provide comments, if any, within thirty (30) days to the Advisory Board prior to the date set for the Advisory Board vote on the application:
 - a. Cooperative Extension Office;
 - b. Greene County Tax Assessor;
 - c. Natural Resources Conservation Service;
 - d. County Manager
 - e. County Planning Department
 3. Prior to establishment or enlargement of any district a public hearing shall be held by the Advisory Board to receive comments from adjoining property owners and others. Notice of date, time and place of public hearing shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation within Greene County at a minimum of once per week for two consecutive weeks.
- C. Appeal:
- If the Advisory Board denies an application, the petitioner shall have thirty (30) days after the mailing of the notice to appeal the decision to the Board of Commissioners. Such appeal shall be presented in writing. The decision of the Board of Commissioners is final.

ARTICLE IX

REVOCATION OF PRESERVATION AGREEMENT

By written notice to the Advisory Board, a landowner of qualifying farmland may revoke the Preservation Agreement or the Advisory Board may revoke the same Preservation Agreement based on noncompliance by the landowner. Notice of a meeting to consider revocation shall be sent to the landowner at least ten days prior the meeting at which such revocation will be considered. Notice is sufficient if mailed to address of the owner, which is maintained in the Greene County Tax Department. Revocation by the Advisory Board shall be appealed to the Board of Commissioners within thirty days of the mailing of such notice. The decision of the Board of Commissioners is final. Such revocation shall result in loss of qualifying farm status and loss of eligibility to participate in a district. Absent noncompliance by the landowner, neither the Advisory Board nor the Board of Commissioners shall revoke any preservation agreements prior to its expiration.

ARTICLE X

PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. Purpose:

No state or local public agency or governmental unit may formally initiate any action to condemn any interest in qualifying farmland within a District until such agency or unit has requested the Advisory Board to hold a public hearing on the proposed condemnation.

B. Procedure:

1. Upon receiving a request, the Advisory Board shall publish notice describing the proposed action in the appropriate newspaper of Greene County within five (5) business days of the request, and will in the same notice notify the public of a public hearing on the proposed condemnation, to be held within twenty (20) days of receipt of the request.
2. The Advisory Board shall meet to review:
 - a. Whether the need for the project has been satisfactorily established by the agency or unit of government involved, including a review of any fiscal impact analysis conducted by the agency involved; and
 - b. Whether there are alternatives to the proposed action that have less impact and are less disruptive to the agricultural activities of the District within which the proposed action is to take place.
3. The Advisory Board may consult with Cooperative Extension, Natural Resources Conservation Service District Conservationist, and any other individuals, agencies, or organizations deemed by the Advisory Board to be necessary for its review of the proposed action.
4. The Advisory Board shall respond to the requesting agency within thirty days of the Advisory Board receiving a request for condemnation.
5. Pursuant to N.C.G.S. 106-740, the Board of Commissioners shall not permit any formal initiation of condemnation by local agencies while the proposed condemnation is properly before the Advisory Board.

ARTICLE XI

NOTIFICATION

A. Record Notice of Proximity to Voluntary Agricultural District:

1. Procedure:

When Greene County computerizes its County Land Records System, the following requirements outlined in this section shall be implemented and enforced. Upon certification of qualifying farmland and designation of real property as a District, the qualifying farmland and real property, which is contained in the Greene County Land Records System shall be indicated on an overlay, if possible, to give notice reasonably calculated to alert a person researching the title of a particular tract that such tract is located within one- fourth aerial mile of a voluntary agricultural district.

2. Limit of Liability:

In no event shall the County or any of its officers, employees, or agents be held liable in damages for any misfeasance, malfeasance, or nonfeasance occurring in good faith in connection with the duties or obligations imposed by this ordinance.

3. No Cause of Action:

In no event shall any cause of action arise out of the failure of a person researching the title of a particular tract to report to any person the proximity of the tract to a qualifying farm or voluntary agricultural district as defined in this ordinance.

B. Signage:

Signs identifying approved agricultural districts may be placed along the rights-of-way of major roads that pass through or next to those districts. Members of the Agricultural District may place signs on their individual farms denoting their agricultural district membership. Placement of signage shall be coordinated with the N.C. Department of Transportation.

C. Maps:

Maps identifying approved agricultural districts shall be provided to the following agencies or offices:

- a. Register of Deeds;
- b. Natural Resources Conservation Service;
- c. North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service;
- d. County Planning;
- e. County Tax; and
- f. Any other such agency or office the Advisory Board deems appropriate.

ARTICLE XII

SUBDIVISION ORDINANCE AND ZONING ORDINANCE REVIEW

Developers of subdivisions or planned unit developments shall designate on preliminary and final development plans, the existence of the Districts within one-fourth aerial mile of the proposed development.

ARTICLE XIII

WAIVER OF WATER AND SEWER ASSESSMENTS

A. No Assessment:

A landowner belonging to the Agricultural District shall not be assessed for or be required to connect to Greene County water and/or sewer system on enrolled land unless the enrolled land is located within a designated growth corridor.

B. Abeyance:

County of Greene water and sewer assessments shall be held in abeyance, without interest, for farms in an agricultural district until improvements on such property are connected to the water or sewer system for which the assessment was made.

C. Termination of Abeyance:

When the period of abeyance ends, the assessment is payable in accordance with the terms set out in the assessment resolution.

- D. Suspension of Statute of Limitations:
Statutes of limitations are suspended during the time that any assessment is held in abeyance without interest.
- E. Other Statutory Abeyance Procedures:
Nothing in this section is intended to diminish the authority of the County to hold assessments in abeyance under N.C.G.S. 153A-201, or other applicable law.
- F. Conflict with Water and/or Sewer Construction and Improvement Grants:
To the extent that this section conflicts with the terms of federal, state, or other grants under which county water and/or sewer systems are constructed this section shall not apply.

ARTICLE XIV

COUNTY LAND-USE PLANNING

- A. Duty of the Advisory Board:
It shall be the duty of the Advisory Board to advise the Board of Commissioners or the agency or office to which the Board of Commissioners delegate authority to oversee county land use planning, on the status, progress, and activities of the county's agricultural district program and to also coordinate the formation and maintenance of agricultural districts with the county's land use planning activities and the county's land use plan if one currently exists at the time this ordinance is enacted or when one is formed.
- B. Posting of Notice:
The following notice, of a size and form suitable for posting, shall be posted in the office of the Register of Deeds, and any other office or agency the Advisory Board deems necessary"

Greene County has established agricultural districts to protect and preserve agricultural lands and activities. These districts have been developed and mapped by the county to inform all purchasers of real property that certain agricultural and forestry activities, including but not limited to pesticide spraying, manure spreading, machinery and truck operation, livestock operations, sawing, and other common farming activities may occur in these districts any time during the day or night. Maps and information on the location and establishment of these districts can be obtained from the County Planning office.

Growth Corridors:

At such time as the county might establish designated growth corridors, agricultural districts will not be permitted in the designated growth corridors, as delineated on the official county planning map without the approval of the Board of Commissioners. Districts located in growth corridors designated after the effective date of this program may remain, but shall not be expanded within the growth corridor area without Planning Board review and the approval of the Board of Commissioners.

ARTICLE XV CONSULTATION AUTHORITY

The Advisory Board may consult with the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service, the Natural Resources Conservation Service office, the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, and with any other individual, agency, or organization the Advisory Board deems necessary to properly conduct its business.

ARTICLE XVI NORTH CAROLINA AGENCY NOTIFICATION

Annual Report to the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services:

A copy of this ordinance shall be sent to the Office of the North Carolina Commissioner of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the Board of Commissioners, the County Office of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension, and the Soil and Water Conservation District office after adoption. At least annually the county shall submit a written report to the Commissioner of Agriculture and Consumer Services on the county's agricultural district program, including the following information:

1. Number of landowners enrolled;
2. Number of acres enrolled;
3. Number of acres certified during the reporting period;
4. Number of acres denied during the reporting period;
5. Number of acres for which applications are pending;
6. Copies of any amendments to the ordinance; and
7. Any other information the Advisory Board deems useful.

ARTICLE XVII MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

A. Severability:

If any article, section, subsection, clause, phrase, or portion of this ordinance is for any reason found invalid or unconstitutional by any court of competent jurisdiction, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this ordinance.

B. Conflict with other Ordinance and Statutes:

Whenever the provisions of this ordinance conflict with other ordinances of Greene County, this ordinance shall govern. Whenever the provisions of any federal or state statute require more restrictive provisions than are required by this ordinance, the provisions of such statute shall govern.

C. Amendments:

This ordinance may be amended from time to time after a public hearing, a notice of which shall be sent to program participants thirty (30) days prior to the hearing and in consultation with the Advisory Board and voted on by the County Commissioners.

ARTICLE XVIII

ENACTMENT

The Greene County Board of Commissioners hereby adopts and enacts the preceding articles and sections of this ordinance.

Adopted this the 7th day of May, 2007.

GREENE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

/s/ Bennie Heath

ATTEST:

Chairperson

/s/ Don Davenport

Clerk to Board of Commissioners

Appendix B

Agricultural Producer, Agribusiness and Non-Farm Surveys

Surveys and interviews were conducted in the county to account for the trends, issues and opportunities the community as a whole identifies for agriculture. The populations targeted were: producers/landowners, agribusinesses, and the general non-farm public.

The county team distributed the surveys through their meetings, to their advisory boards, and on their websites. The team also provided names of key people in the county to interview. All survey and interview responses were compiled to determine the response.

Copies of the three surveys are below.